



Department of Political and Social Sciences

The Symbolic Value of Descriptive Representation: The Case of Female Representation

Ana Espírito-Santo

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor of Political and Social Sciences of the European University Institute

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To my grandmother, Teresa – a farmer her whole life in a tiny little village in the centre of Portugal, who turned 89 years old on the 25th of August 2011 – for her courage to sell her lands in the 1960s in order to be able to afford to send her children (mainly daughters) to university, against the will and understanding of everybody else, including her husband – in a time in which having lands and the hands to work it was everything and education almost nothing.

Abstract

Most of the studies on political underrepresentation have tried to explain the factors that account for the underrepresentation of some groups in political power. The present research project focuses on the link between descriptive and symbolic representation and seeks to understand what consequences a more proportional political environment produces on the attitudes of both underrepresented and overrepresented groups towards the political system. Women remain among the least politically represented groups and therefore this project focuses on and analyses them in various political positions. Two dimensions of the relationship between citizens and politics are analysed: the *level of political engagement* and the *evaluation of the political system*. While there is a clear gender gap in the former, the same does not apply to the latter.

This dissertation reaches three important achievements. The first one is to develop the first theoretical framework of the potential causal mechanisms that are likely to operate behind the impact that female politicians have on both women and men. The second is to show that men can indeed be positively influenced; but mainly to clarify that the way they evaluate the political system is nearly the only way they are affected – their level of political engagement does not change. The third achievement is to show that, while most scholarship has been focusing on the topic *political involvement*, the presence of female politicians seems to be more connected to the way women *evaluate the political system*. This means that the ‘role model effect’ is not the main mechanism at work here. Instead, the idea that the presence of women is necessary to represent women’s interests and the fact that they are seen as bringing something new into the political world appear more influential factors.

Altogether the signs of the impact of the presence of female politicians are modest.

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*'In 1981 we got our first female Prime Minister,
Gro Harlem Brundtland from the Labour Party.
All together she was a Prime Minister for ten years. (...)
I remember having a notice from a newspaper at my desk for several years.
It was an interview with a 15 year old asking the following question:
"Can a man really be a Prime Minister?"'*

**Inga Marte Thorkildsen, Norwegian MP
Nora's Sisters Seminar - Women in Politics,
Ramallah, 8-9 March 2008.**

Part I: The theoretical basis of the project

1 – Introduction

The under and overrepresented

This thesis focuses on two dimensions of the symbolic relationship between citizens and politics: the *level of political engagement* and the *evaluation of the political system*. The research question of this project is how members of under and overrepresented groups react to the increased political inclusion of the underrepresented group. Women remain among the least politically represented groups and therefore this project centres on them.

It is commonly believed that political recruitment is a very important feature of democracies and that it ought to be a democratic process: ‘(...) it should be possible in principle for every citizen to run for office’ (Weßels, 1997: 76). However, in practical terms, many groups remain underrepresented in all levels of political power. Most of the studies of political underrepresentation have tried to explain the factors that account for this. The present research project seeks to look at a more unexplored area, by trying to understand what consequences a more proportionate political environment produces on the attitudes of the citizens towards the political system and the politicians. By illuminating the relationship between descriptive representation and citizens’ attitudes toward politics, this project aims to contribute to the literature on political representation.

For many decades, the importance of descriptive (or mirror) representation – i.e. the similarity in the characteristics of the representatives to those of the represented – has been discussed. Most debate has focused on the question of whether the presence of different kinds of politicians secures the defence of the interests of each represented group. Such representation of interests is termed substantive representation. That presence of their members in the legislature secures the substantive representation of a group has been a very common argument used to defend policies such as the introduction of quotas both for women and/or ethnic minorities.

However, this thesis focuses instead on the link between descriptive and symbolic representation. According to Hanna Pitkin (1967), symbolic representation refers to whether or not the represented believe they are well represented. In this project, symbolic representation is defined in a broader way to include not only the feeling of being well or poorly represented, also the kinds of relationships that take place between citizens and the political world. So, in

other words, this thesis looks at the symbolic changes that are caused by the presence of politicians who resemble their constituents. Therefore it is not so much concerned with whether or not a more proportionate political environment produces any changes in the kind of policies discussed and/or approved, but on how it affects the relationship between citizens and politics. The project also pays attention to the fact that citizens include not only the underrepresented groups but also the others, i.e. the overrepresented group. While it is plausible that the presence of more politicians who are members of an underrepresented group will provoke changes on the way the members of that group relate to politics, it is also possible that some differences are also noticed among the overrepresented group. However, whereas the changes on the former are very likely to be positive, the modifications on the latter are less predictable.

The puzzle and the goals

Most of the studies on the consequences of having a more proportionate political environment claim to find a positive symbolic effect on the members of the underrepresented groups – although there are a few exceptions. This is the case both for studies that focus on gender¹ and those that concentrate on ethnic differences (see State of the Field, section 2.2). There seems to be however a significant difference between these two kinds of studies. While in the case of minorities, the scholars frequently report having found a negative impact on the *other* group, i.e. on the overrepresented group (Barreto, Segura et al., 2004: 74; Gay, 2001); the opposite result is sometimes described in the case of research done on women and men (Hansen, 1997; Lawless, 2004; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005; Karp and Banducci, 2008). This apparently opposite result offers a quite interesting puzzle. What explains the fact that men sometimes react positively to the presence of female politicians while white people occasionally react negatively to the presence of politicians from an ethnic minority? The most plausible answer is that ethnic and gender groups have different characteristics – while ethnic groups are minorities, women comprise half of the population, and women are transversal to all other groups. But the most important reason is probably the fact that diverse ethnic groups and both genders have different relationships with each other. In fact, in any society there is much more contact between women

¹ I have decided to use the terms ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ interchangeably although I am aware of the differences between both concepts. While *gender* is a continuous variable distinguishing degrees of masculinity and femininity, *sex* is a dichotomous variable distinguishing the categories women and men.

and men than between majority and minority groups – which is explicable by the fact that both sexes are necessary for the survival of the species. A very simple illustration of this is that most ethnic minority families are also mixed sex.

Most of the authors who have studied the symbolic impact of the presence of underrepresented groups have looked only at the concept of *political involvement*; i.e. they are interested in seeing what happens to the underrepresented group's level of political involvement when some members of 'their' group occupy a political position (for example, Atkeson, 2003; Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001; Dolan, 2006; Koch, 1997; Reingold and Harrell, 2009; Sapiro and Conover, 1997). My argument here is that the symbolic relationship between citizens and politics is very broad and that *political involvement* is only one among other concepts that are likely to be influenced by the presence of members of an underrepresented group in political power. Another basic concept is *evaluation of the political system*. Therefore, I argue that it is important to understand the dimensions of the symbolic relationship between citizens and politics and the casual mechanisms that explain the *impact* of each, since they are not necessarily the same. For instance, the mechanism 'role model effect' – which is widely mentioned in the literature (for example, Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001; Campbell and Wolbrecht, 2006) – applies only to impact on *political involvement*, it does not account for *evaluation of the political system*. Furthermore, the expectations of impact on the underrepresented group and on the overrepresented group might also change according to which dimensions of the symbolic relationship between citizens and politics we are thinking of.

In this project, two dimensions of the relationship between citizens and politics are analysed: the *level of political engagement* and the *evaluation of the political system*. The former focuses on how involved citizens feel with politics and it is usually measured by political scientists through a number of indicators such as level of interest in politics, frequency of discussion of political issues, participation in different kinds of political participation, and so on. On the other hand, *evaluation of the political system* refers to the assessment citizens make of politics and politicians and it is typically operationalised through the following indicators: satisfaction with the way democracy works, trust in the political regime and the politicians, among others. This project uses some of the indicators of these two concepts as dependent variables (see section 2.1 for details). In very broad terms then, this project seeks to answer the

question of whether *having politicians who resemble their constituents has an impact on the way citizens evaluate the political system and/or on their level of engagement in politics.*

This research project aims to understand the puzzle previously described, using the example of female politicians only, so the main independent variables of this project are important indicators of the presence of female politicians. Ideally one would consider both female politicians and those belonging to an ethnic minority. However, since to study race and ethnicity in a comparative fashion raises a number of concerns (Hughes, 2008: 14-16 mainly), I decided to concentrate on the sex variable but to use the results of ethnic minorities' studies to contrast with my own results. In order to solve the puzzle two strategies will be followed, a theoretical one and an empirical one. The theoretical strategy consists of delineating a broad and exhaustive consideration of the impacts to be expected from the presence of female politicians on citizens' political attitudes. This discussion also includes a reflection on why those impacts are likely to be observed on both women and men. What are the causal mechanisms in this process? Fred Cutler asks a central question in his work, 'what psychological mechanism is driving the use of demographic similarity as a criterion for voting' (2002: 484). If an answer to that question remains open in terms of electoral behaviour, it is much further away in terms of other political attitudes. The second strategy consists of further exploring empirically the impact of the presence of female politicians. First however, I outline the state of empirical research on this area.

Summary of the state of the field

As mentioned before, the studies done on this area so far have mainly looked at the consequences that the presence of female politicians have on citizens' (mainly women's) *political involvement*. Therefore the topic *evaluation of the political system* remains almost unresearched (but see Atkeson and Carrillo, 2007; Lawless, 2004; Karp and Banducci, 2008; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005). Although these articles analyse indicators that, in my opinion, are an operationalisation of the concept of *evaluation of the system* (like trust in politicians for example), the researchers tend to consider them as part of the concept of *political involvement*, i.e. as part of the increase in political involvement that the presence of female politicians is likely to provoke among women. Therefore, they do not directly reflect on the concept of

evaluation of the political system. Instead they take these indicators as one more way of measuring *political involvement*. That is why I consider it to be almost unresearched.

Political involvement

The overwhelming majority of the studies of the potential consequences of the presence of women politicians on citizens' *political involvement* focus on the United States. Therefore, the only country about which we know anything concerning this topic is the United States, and even this knowledge is far from being solid and homogenous. While most studies find that the presence of female politicians and/or female candidates produces some kind of impact on women's political engagement, others reach opposite results. The most consensual result is that women are more likely to recognise candidates where more candidates are women (Atkeson, 2003; Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001; Koch, 1997; Reingold and Harrell, 2009). There is also a positive relationship between the presence of female politicians and women's levels of political discussion – women are more likely to report that they discuss politics when more candidates are women (Atkeson, 2003; Reingold and Harrell, 2009). However, other indicators of political engagement generate more mixed findings. An increase in women's interest in the campaign was observed in some studies (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001; Reingold and Harrell, 2009; Sapiro and Conover, 1997) but not in others (Atkeson, 2003; Koch, 1997). Similar mixed results were found regarding internal efficacy, convincing others to vote for a specific party or some other kinds of political participation (Atkeson, 2003; Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001; Dolan, 2006; Lawless, 2004; Reingold and Harrell, 2009). A slightly different study demonstrates that the presence of competitive female candidates for Senate, House of Representatives or governor have an impact on young girls' intention to engage in political activity as adults (Campbell and Wolbrecht, 2006). To summarize we can say that most studies (with the exception of Lawless, 2004 and Dolan, 2006) do find that the presence of female politicians/candidates produce an impact on women's political engagement, not necessarily on all indicators, but on many indicators.

An even larger variety of results can be found in the few studies done on European countries or using cross national data. Norris, Lovenduski et al. (2004) found signs of impact for level of turnout and other political engagement variables in the UK. Wolbrecht and Campbell (2007) observed higher levels of political discussion and activity among women and girls who live in countries with a higher percentage of women's representation in national parliaments. However,

Karp and Banducci (2008), using the same independent variable, reached less positive findings for another group of countries both in and outside Europe. Although focusing on gender quotas, Zetterberg (2009) found a similar negative result, i.e. that gender quotas do not appear to be associated with increased levels of political involvement among Latin American women.

Only one study finds a clear positive impact of the presence of female politicians or candidates, on men's level of political involvement. Reingold and Harrell report that being in an environment with female candidates/officeholders significantly increases the likelihood that men try to influence the votes of others² (Reingold and Harrell, 2009: 8). By contrast, another study suggests that the presence of female candidates discourages political proselytising by men (i.e. persuading people to vote for a particular party) (Hansen, 1997: 93).

Evaluation of the political system

I am aware of only five papers or chapters that deal with indicators that operationalise *evaluation of the system*, two of which focus on the US only (Atkeson and Carrillo, 2007; Lawless, 2004) while the other three do cross national analysis (Karp and Banducci, 2008; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005; Zetterberg 2009). Apart from the latter, they all find at least some evidence of impact. It is important to notice that *evaluation of the political system* can be measured in multiple ways and each of these studies focused on only one or two indicators or variables, namely: confidence in the legislature (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005), trust in the federal government and approval of the performance of House members (Lawless, 2004), political trust (Zetterberg 2009), satisfaction with democracy, whether elections reflect the views of citizens (Karp and Banducci, 2008) and external political efficacy (Atkeson and Carrillo, 2007). The only two of these effects not found to be statistically significant were found by Lawless (2004) for the variable 'trust in federal government' and by Zetterberg (2009) for the variable 'political trust'. It is important to clarify that the latter focuses on Latin American countries and is interested in the impact of quotas – instead of the presence of women in political power, which is strongly connected though slightly different. Other forms of evaluation of the political system seem to improve in women's eyes, when more female politicians are present.

² However, in a further step of the analysis the authors reveal that is only the case when the female candidates belong to the *opposing* party. In general, 'men's political engagement is indifferent to the interaction between gender and party representation' (Reingold and Harrell, 2009: 11).

However, Lawless found a positive impact for the variable ‘trust in federal government’ for men – men represented by women senators have higher levels of trust in the federal government (2004: 94)³. Furthermore, all other studies just mentioned (Atkeson and Carrillo, 2007; Karp and Banducci, 2008; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005) observed an impact on both women and men. Researchers were mostly surprised about this finding as is visible from the expressions they use: ‘apparent anomaly in the results’ (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005: 425), ‘(...) is intriguing and counterintuitive’ (Atkeson and Carrillo, 2007: 90) and ‘(...) are counterintuitive results’ (Lawless, 2004: 94). However, none of the researchers explore the results much further.

Ethnic minorities’ studies

Results from ethnic minorities studies also vary, although the majority finds that a more proportionate political environment has a positive impact on the underrepresented group’s level of political involvement (Bobo and Gilliam, 1990; Banducci, Donovan et al., 2004; Pantoja and Segura, 2003; Whitby, 2007 – but see Gay, 2001).

Two of these studies reported negative results among the overrepresented group’s level of *political involvement*. Barreto, Segura et al. observed that non-Hispanics living in Latino majority districts have a lower turnout than average (2004: 74). Gay noted that white citizens had lower levels of turnout in districts with black congressional representation (2001).

Concerning the *evaluation of the political system* similar results are sometimes reported. Cole’s research shows that at least 40 percent of the white respondents felt that African-American elected officials would “‘mainly represent the interests of the black community ahead of the entire city’s (1976: 114), which suggests that the presence of black politicians may decrease whites’ trust in city government. Abney and Hutcheson (1981) and Howell and Fagan (1988) observe that black’s political trust is significantly higher where a black mayor was in office, while whites do not seem to be affected by the ethnicity of their representatives.

³ Lawless (2004) got a similar result (i.e. positive for men but not for women) regarding levels of efficacy (2004: 94). However, I decided not to give too much importance to that variable since it is an index that includes a variable that in my opinion should be part of the political involvement and another that should be part of the evaluation of the political system. The two variables included in the index are: external efficacy (whether respondent contends that public officials care what people like respondent thinks) and internal efficacy (whether he/she believes people like him/her have a say in government).

Lacunae identified in the literature

Methodological

It is clear that there is something worth looking at, both in the case of *political involvement* and in the case of *evaluation of the system*. Many of the studies done so far tend to reach strong conclusions. Even when the word ‘impact’ or one of its synonyms is correctly avoided (for example, Karp and Banducci, 2008), a cause and an effect are somehow implicit.

The causal effect that this project and all the papers mentioned above treat is particularly difficult to tackle as it has three inherent problems. The first is the risk of spurious correlations: ‘what appears to be an effect of the presence of female MPs may actually be the effect of a political or social context that facilitates both female representation and women’s political engagement and attitudes’ (Wolbrecht and Campbell, 2007). In other words it is hard to prove whether the change that is observed is really due to the sex of the politician(s) and not from something else. For example, it is plausible to imagine that in countries where democracy works better, there are more women in political power and the citizens are more satisfied with democracy. This problem is common both for *political involvement* and *evaluation of the political system*.

The second problem is the possibility of a reciprocal relationship and it applies to the level of *political involvement* only. It is related to the fact that the causal mechanism considered in these studies is also likely to occur in the opposite direction. In other words, the question of interest here is whether the presence of more female politicians leads to more political involvement among women. However, it can very well be that those countries where the gender gap in political engagement is already lower are also those more likely to have a higher presence of women in political power.

The third problem is endogeneity and is common to both *political involvement* and *evaluation of the system*. Endogeneity happens because the people who are objects of analysis are the same people who voted for the female politicians whose impact is being analysed.

The only two studies that acknowledge some of these problems are Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler (2005) and Wolbrecht and Campbell (2007). In the latter the reciprocal causal problem is only identified but it is not explored empirically. The former authors go further since they apply structural equation modelling, but they use aggregate data.

Theoretical

An important lacuna is that there is no study that combines data analysis and deep theoretical reflections on the causal mechanisms behind the potential impacts of presence. One reason for this may be that the publications on the topic are only articles or chapters, and are therefore limited in length, allowing the authors to concentrate either on theory or on empirical analysis. Even the theoretical studies on the subject are not very long; I am not aware of any article that focuses solely on the potential impact of the presence of female politicians. While many ideas have been raised in discussion, the systematic work of putting them together in order to give a theoretical explanation to the results has not yet been undertaken. A very specific and crucial theoretical blind spot is the question of why we observe an impact on men.

Geographical

There are almost no studies done beyond the US. The few studies mentioned above are very important and suggest that the impact of the presence of female MPs is not something specific to the United States both for political involvement and evaluation of the political system (Karp and Banducci, 2008; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005; Wolbrecht and Campbell, 2007). However, the complexity inherent to cross national analyses makes it harder to reach reliable results than when we consider one country only. Therefore, issues of methodology appear even more important in studies where many countries are analysed. A further problem is that the existing multi country studies (Karp and Banducci, 2008; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005; Wolbrecht and Campbell, 2007) consider only one independent variable, the *percentage of female representation in national parliament*. Since we cannot isolate the impact that the gender composition of each layer of political institutions has on citizens, the omission of one or more layers might create biased results. Therefore, this thesis focuses on women in various political positions.

Research design

This project aims to understand how members of under and overrepresented groups react to the increased political inclusion of the underrepresented group. It aims to do that by focusing on female politicians. As mentioned above, two strategies will be followed, a theoretical one and an empirical one.

Theoretical strategy

The theoretical chapter (chapter 3) explores the concepts: *political engagement* and *evaluation of the political system* – each corresponding to one of the two basic hypotheses of this project. The first one is that other women might start feeling more interested, and therefore become more active, in politics. This might be the case because the fact that women have always been underrepresented in political office may contribute to their believing that they are not able to do the job⁴, or simply that politics is a *men's world*. If that is the case, then the recent increases, albeit often small, in women's representation in political office in many countries is likely to produce some changes. The second basic hypothesis is that citizens may evaluate more positively a political environment in which both sexes are represented, than one in which only men are represented. In other words, women's presence might contribute to the legitimization of the system⁵. This might be the case because a more varied system, from the descriptive point of view, might be seen as more open, and fairer. The latter reason might also have an impact on both women's and men's level of political involvement, so the presence of female politicians (I hypothesise) is also likely to have a positive impact on men's level of political engagement (see figure 1.1).

The main mechanisms that supposedly operate behind these impacts derive from Jane Mansbridge's work (1999) and therefore I gave them the same name Mansbridge gave them. So the first one is named *social meaning*, while the second is called *de facto legitimacy* (see chapter 3 for details).

⁴ This argument was inspired in the work of Charles Taylor (1992), Anne Phillips (1995) and Jane Mansbridge (1999) – see chapter 3 for a complete review of the literature on this.

⁵ This argument was inspired in the work of Jane Mansbridge (1999) – see chapter 3 for a complete review of the literature on this.

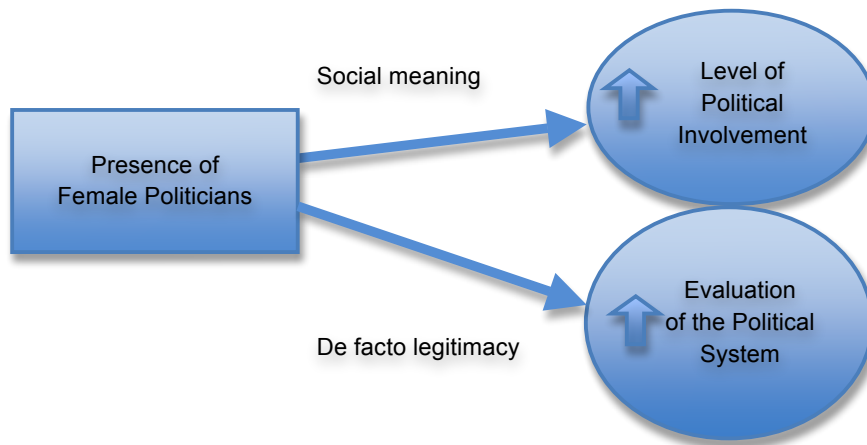


Figure 1.1: Basic schema tackled by this research project

Empirical strategy

The second strategy is to test empirically the theoretical ideas, and to complement the studies that have already tried to do this (see complete State of the Field in section 2.2). Each of the hypotheses advanced in the previous section is analysed both through cross national data and through single-case studies of public opinion surveys and all four empirical chapters use different advanced techniques of data analysis. Unfortunately, the available datasets are not suited to effective causal inference analysis. The alternative was to use a combination of comparative statistical analysis (across many countries), longitudinal analysis and panel data analysis. The latter is the second best solution, one that could only be used in the case of Germany (chapter 7), as there are no suitable panel studies for other countries.

To work with data on many countries, such as the Comparative Study of Electoral System (CSES) dataset that is largely used in this project (chapters 5 and 6), has the great advantage of allowing generalisations and presents an international picture. However, it also has some limitations. The first is related to the difference between the wording of questions in each country, which may be caused by translation problems or by conscious decisions made by the national teams; and of course the same question might be interpreted differently in different countries, i.e. cultures, because sometimes the same term (or word) has different meanings or is

used in diverse contexts⁶. The second limitation is that it is impossible to be aware of the context details of all analysed countries, which prevents controlling for all potential factors.

In some cases the findings are very clear. The chapter on Germany (chapter 7) describes findings that are so obviously connected to the independent variable that they leave little doubt that it is the presence of Angela Merkel as Chancellor that is provoking the increase in political interest. However, in other cases, such as in the chapter on satisfaction with democracy (chapter 5), the findings may only suggest that the feminisation of political power leads to more satisfaction with the democratic process.

The chapter on Portugal (chapter 4) is of a totally different nature as it aims to understand why people might be willing to have more female politicians. That chapter is an attempt to develop a ‘mechanism approach’, i.e. an effort to distinguish ‘genuine causality and coincidental association, and it increases the understanding of why we observe what we observe’ (Héritier, 2008; quoting Hedström and Swedberg, 1998: 8/9)⁷. Unfortunately, no similar analysis was possible for the case of political involvement since the process is supposed to be unconscious, without an instrumental reason behind it.

Expectations

The results of previous research indicate that the impact potentially caused by the presence of female politicians is by no means clear, direct and robust. Furthermore, the literature on the topic suggests that some other factors are likely to influence the impact. Whether the female politicians run in a *competitive and/or visible race* (Atkeson, 2003; Campbell and Wolbrecht, 2006; but see Dolan, 2006⁸); whether the descriptive representation of women is a salient concern (Koch, 1997), whether the female candidate focuses on issues of concern to women (Hansen, 1997) or whether the environment of the election or the media focus on the politicians’ sex, seem to be very important factors.

It would be unreasonable to expect more than a modest impact from the presence of female politicians for several reasons: sex is only one among many personal characteristics of the

⁶ A common example of such a case are the words “state” and “government” which are sometimes taken as synonym and other times not (Sartori, 2009: 100).

⁷ Hedström, Peter and Richard Swedberg (eds) (1998), *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁸ Dolan (2006) failed to find an impact even when women run in competitive races.

politicians, political leaders are only one component of a complex political system, and each political system is integrated in a specific socio-economic environment that is also likely to play a role here. In other words, there are many layers of factors between the sex of politicians and the citizens. Even if one believed that the sex of the politicians was determinant, it would still be unreasonable to expect the presence of female politicians to produce a radical change in citizens, as the latter are not totally open to influences from the outside. They have their underlying beliefs and knowledge.

A very important issue that has not yet been mentioned is *heterogeneity*. Citizens, female politicians, and countries (established democracies) have been treated so far as homogeneous entities, while we know that they are far from that. Just to give a few examples, not all female politicians are equal, not all citizens have the same level of political sophistication and not all the countries have the same political system. All these differences are expected to matter for the impact that I discuss in this thesis.

Discussing the effects of role models in an educational environment, Lucia Nixon and Michael Robinson (1999) support these ideas of heterogeneity and underlying beliefs, by quoting two other authors: ‘one interpretation of the mixed results regarding the effect of female college students is that the educational aspirations of young women may be largely determined before they enter college (Canes and Rosen, 1995)⁹’ (Nixon and Robinson, 1999: 185). John Griffin and Michael Keane’s conclusion also supports the idea that people are heterogeneous (2006). They found out that *liberal* and *conservative* African Americans’ level of turnout is influenced differently by descriptive representation. Finally, literature has shown that individuals with more political information are less likely to follow gender as a voting cue (for example, McDermott, 1997 and 1998)¹⁰.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided in four parts. Part I – *The theoretical basis of the project* – includes two chapters: ‘Main concepts: description and literature review’ (chapter 2) and ‘Theoretical Framework (chapter 3). Chapter 2 describes briefly how the main concepts were operationalised,

⁹ Canes, B. J. and H. S. Rosen. 1995. ‘Following in her footsteps? Faculty gender composition and women’s choice of College Majors’. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 48:486-504.

¹⁰ Although Fred Cutler argues that even the most sophisticated electors use the socio-demographic characteristics of politicians as a voting cue: ‘policy voters are also socio-demographic voters – they use *both* criteria’ (2002: 483).

gives an overview of the gender gap both in political power and in political involvement among citizens in general and presents a more detailed State of the Field than the summary that was included in the Introduction. Chapter 3, 'Theoretical Framework, is the most important chapter of this Part. Its goal is to put together a comprehensive theoretical schema that accounts for the potential impact of the presence of female politicians on citizens' political attitudes.

Part II deals with the *evaluation of the system* and starts with a chapter on Portugal, 4, which explores why people might be willing to have more female politicians. Although it has a different perspective, this chapter gives a glimpse of how the link between the feminisation of political power and the evaluation of the system might occur. Chapter 5 consists of a cross national analysis of whether, in countries where the female representation is higher, citizens tend to evaluate democracy more positively.

Part III focuses on *political involvement* and starts with chapter 6, which focuses on relationship between the gender gap in grassroots political participation and the gender gap in political participation at the elite level. Chapter 7 concentrates on Germany where, through the use of a panel study that starts before Angela Merkel was elected Chancellor and goes on until after her election, the changes in political interest are studied.

Part IV, *Presence of female politicians: indifferent or crucial?*, is one chapter which presents the Conclusions and Discussion.

2 – Main concepts: description and literature review

2.1 - Utilising the main concepts

Operationalisation of the main concepts

The present research project aims to understand how a more gender-proportional political environment changes citizens' level of political involvement and how they evaluate the political system. Therefore, three main concepts are tackled by this thesis: the presence of female politicians, the level of citizens' political involvement and the citizens' evaluation of the political system. As mentioned in the Introduction, while the indicators of the former consist of *the independent variables* of this project, the indicators of the two latter are *the dependent variables*. After exposing the way these concepts were operationalised, a brief description of how each behaves in the real world will be given.

By *presence of female politicians* I mean the existence of women in all national key political positions. Among the studies done on the US, the Senate is the most researched political body, sometimes examined separately (Koch, 1997), other times investigated together with the House of Representatives (Lawless, 2004; Dolan, 2006; Sapiro and Conover, 1997), or with the office of Governor (Atkeson, 2003; Hansen, 1997). Finally, some studies consider all three political institutions (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001; Campbell and Wolbrecht, 2006; Reingold and Harrell, 2009). In cross national studies, the tendency is to concentrate on the percentage of female representation in national parliaments (Karp and Banducci, 2008; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005; Wolbrecht and Campbell, 2007). As argued before, the best solution is to include all national representative political institutions at the same time. Therefore, this project aims to analyse the different layers of political power that exist at the national level, namely parliament, government, and presidency and prime ministerial positions.

The operationalisation of the other two main concepts – *political involvement* and *evaluation of the system* – is dependent on the variables available in the datasets employed. In order to tackle political involvement, indicators or variables that measure any kind of political activity besides voting are considered, as well as variables that measure interest in politics. Regarding the evaluation of the system, variables such as satisfaction with the democratic process are used.

These two features of relationship with politics (political involvement and evaluation of the system) do not map onto sex difference in the same way. While there is a significant and largely recognised gender gap in political involvement (aside from voting), the same is not observed regarding attitudes toward the political system. For instance, Anderson and Guillory found no gender gap in satisfaction with democracy, except for Ireland and Portugal (1997: 74). Also, Karp and Banducci's analysis suggests that depending on exactly which variable we are looking at either men or women are likely to have a more positive attitude (2008: 110). It is important to emphasise that the gender gap in political attitudes –except for voting behaviour and ideological tendency – is a much less studied topic than the gender gap in political involvement probably for two reasons. First, since there is no evidence of a clear gender gap here, the results are not easy to get published. The second reason is that normatively, inequality in political engagement tends to be considered more worrying than in the evaluation of the system. For these reasons, the next section – which looks at how the concepts relate to the real world – will skip the concept of *evaluation of the political system*.

Main concepts and the real world

Presence of female politicians

The underrepresentation of women in national parliaments is a general feature worldwide. There are, however, large differences between the countries. At the moment, there are only two parliaments in the world with a slightly higher female than male representation: The Republic of Rwanda and Andorra¹¹. Many of the most egalitarian parliaments in the world are in northern Europe. Sweden is the most egalitarian one, with 47% female representation. Figure 2.1 presents the percentage of female representation in 23 established and consolidated democracies.

¹¹ Source: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> (accessed 21/8/2011).

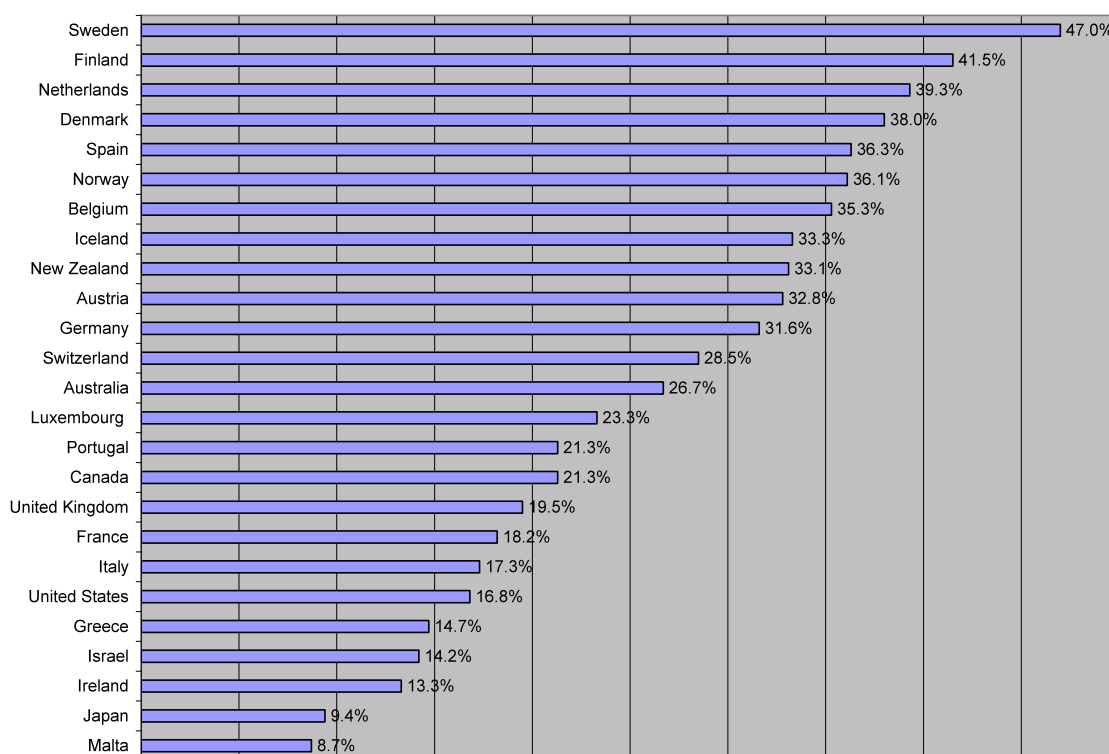


Figure 2.1: Women's representation in national parliaments in established and consolidated democracies, 2008

Source: Inter-parliamentary Union. Women in Parliaments (Webpage: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>, accessed 10/5/2008)¹².

The situation is the same for ministers. Within the European Union there is a tendency for countries to have a slightly higher percentage of women in cabinets than in parliament. But, in general, the results are similar. This is not surprising, as Rebecca Davis concluded, the size of the female contingent in a parliament as a whole is the best way of predicting whether or not women are appointed to cabinet positions (1997: 88)¹³.

With 60% of the cabinet being female, Finland was the country with most women in the cabinet in 2007 (see figure 2.2). Greece (6%) and Portugal (12%) had the least feminized cabinets in Europe.

¹² The value for Portugal was wrong and was therefore corrected by me. It corresponds to the percentage of women's election immediately after the last legislative elections that took place in 2005.

¹³ The author expected the presence of women in a party's parliamentary group to be the best predictor of women's appointment to cabinet office, as a party's parliamentary delegation could be considered its pool of eligible. However this is not the case. This probably happens because 'political parties are most likely to appoint women to office when other parties within their system are also likely to do so' (Davis, 1997: 88). The tendency for some parties to follow the suit of others that are more active in terms of female representation had been identified before (Lovenduski and Norris, 1993: 320-321).

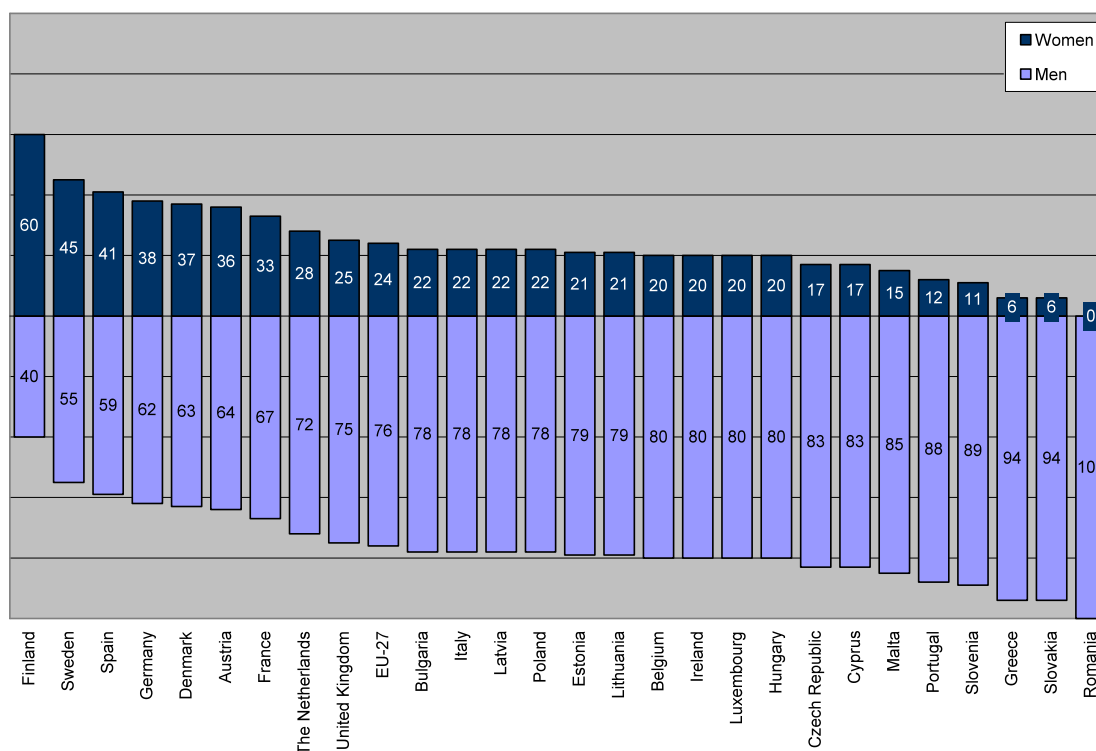


Figure 2.2: Gender composition of senior ministers in national government, European Union, 2007

Source: European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (Webpage: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/women_men_stats/out/measures_out416_en.htm, accessed 14/5/ 2008).

Analysing cabinet appointments in Western Europe between 1968 and 1992, Rebecca Davis argued that ‘women have held office in only half the functional areas in which there are cabinet-level positions’ (1997: 16). One of the areas where the presence of women is usually significantly low is economy. In fact, looking at figure 2.3, we observe that by 2007, female representation in cabinet is even lower if we consider only the ministers with portfolios related to economy (finance, trade, industry and agriculture). Of the 27 countries that compose the EU, 15 have no women occupying these portfolios.

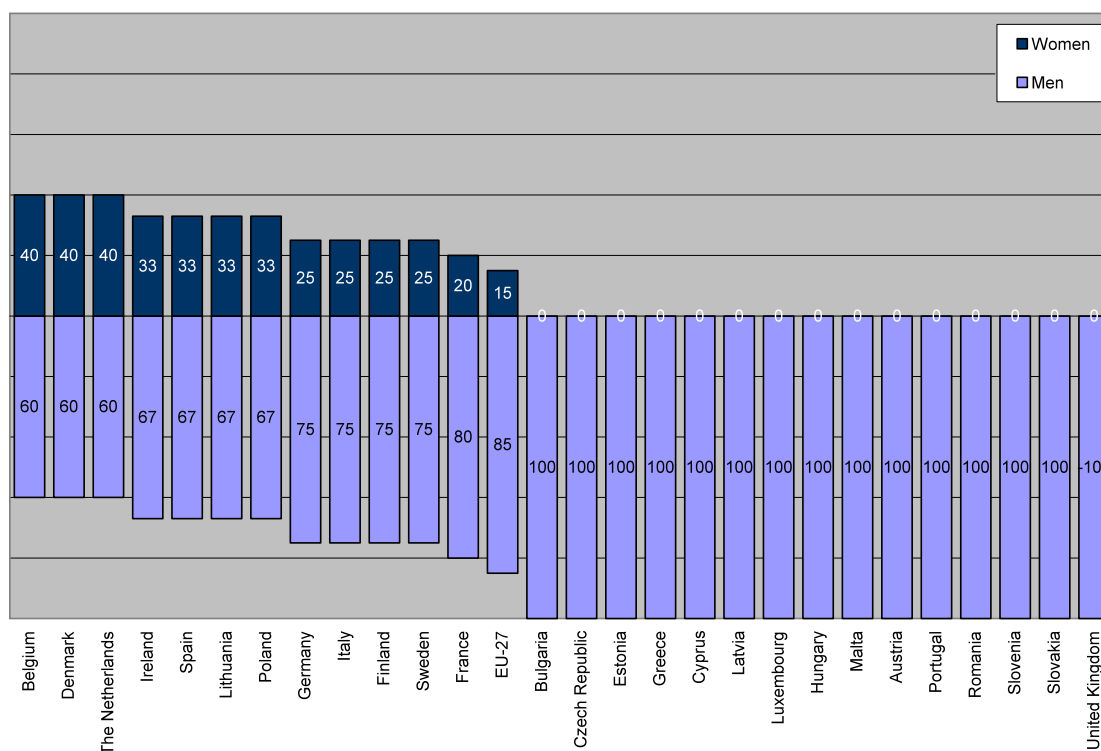


Figure 2.3: Gender composition of senior ministers in national government in the field of action: Economy, European Union, 2007

Source: European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (Webpage: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/women_men_stats/out/measures_out416_en.htm, accessed 14/5/ 2008).

Note: Economic field of action includes the following portfolios: finance, trade, industry and agriculture.

As political leaders (Presidents or Prime Ministers), the number of women is even smaller. According to a recent article, ‘in total, 71 women from 52 countries have joined the elite ranks of female national leaders between 1960 and 2009’ (Jalalzai and Krook, 2010: 7). This figure includes women who have served as President or Prime Minister (if only on a temporary basis) in politically autonomous countries (Jalalzai and Krook, 2010: 7). Although the largest proportion of female leaders comes from Europe (28 in total), other world regions also had large numbers of female leaders, such as Asia (13), Sub-Saharan Africa (11) and Latin America (9). Table 2.1 presents all the female leaders (Presidents or Prime Ministers) that have presided over established and consolidated democracies as of date.

Table 2.1: Women leaders in established and consolidated democracies date ¹⁴

Country	Name	Office	Date
Australia	Julia Gillard	Prime Minister	2010-present
Canada	Kim Campbell	Prime Minister	1993
Finland	Tarja Halonen	President	2000 - present
Finland	Anneli Tuulikki Jäätteenmäki	Prime Minister	2003
Finland	Mari Kiviniemi	Prime Minister	2010-2011
France	Edith Cresson	Prime Minister	1991-92
Germany	Angela Merkel	Chancellor	2005 - present
Iceland	Vigdís Finnbogadóttir	President	1980-96
Iceland	Jóhanna Siguroardóttir	Prime Minister	2009-present
Ireland	Mary Robinson	President	1990-97
Ireland	Mary McAleese	President	1997 – present
Israel	Golda Meir	Prime Minister	1969-1975
Malta	Agatha Barbara	President	1982-1987
New Zealand	Jenny Shipley	Prime Minister	1997-1999
New Zealand	Helen Clark	Prime Minister	1999- 2008
Norway	Gro Harlem Brundtland	Prime Minister	1981, 1986-89, 1990-96
Portugal	Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo	Prime Minister	1979-80
Switzerland	Ruth Dreifuss	President	1999-2000
Switzerland	Doris Leuthard	President	2010-2011
Switzerland	Micheline Calmy-Rey	President	2006 – 2007, 2011-2012
United Kingdom	Margaret Thatcher	Prime Minister	1979-1990

Source: Table 1 (Adler, 1997: 179-180), list of members of the Council of Women World Leaders (Webpage: <http://www.cwwl.org/>, accessed 8/5/2008) and <http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith/00women.htm> (accessed 9/8/2011).

In an article published in 1996, Nancy Adler observed that ‘whereas the dominant pattern is a lack of pattern (that is, a pattern of diversity), the set of countries that the women have led is slightly skewed towards those that are more advantaged and more important’ (1996: 142). However, in 2008, Jalalzai concluded that ‘women have tended to become Presidents and Prime Ministers in contexts where women’s status lags far behind that of men in the educational and

¹⁴ All countries included in figure 2.1 were considered.

economic spheres, and in places where women face numerous constraints on their political and social participation' (quoted by Jalalzai and Krook, 2010: 7). It is also interesting to note that women are more likely to serve in parliamentary systems, and more often as Prime Ministers than as Presidents (Jalalzai and Krook, 2010: 9). The latter could be due to the fact that becoming a Prime Minister is more associated with some kind of party promotion (the cases of Angela Merkel and Margaret Thatcher), while becoming a President implies popular vote (Jalalzai and Krook, 2010: 9). Another plausible reason is that being a Prime Minister in a parliamentary system implies sharing the power with cabinet and party members, while Presidents in presidential system tend to act independently of the legislature (Jalalzai and Krook, 2010: 9).

The ideologies and parties of female leaders represent the full spectrum: communism, socialism, conservatism, and so on (Adler, 1996: 142).

Level of political involvement

Referring to the US, Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Sidney Verba said 'while not large, the disparity between women and men across various forms of political activity is both consistent in direction and surprising in its contours' (2001: 357). Research done on European countries has reached similar results (for example, Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Morales, 1999; Baum and Espírito-Santo, 2004; Baum and Espírito-Santo, 2007). We can confirm that in Western democracies, although women are as likely to vote as men, they still lag behind in other forms of participation, such as being a member of a party, contacting a politician, getting involved in electoral campaigns, being members of voluntary organizations, new social movements and participating in forms of protest, such as demonstrations and boycotts (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001; Conway, Steuarnagel et al., 1997: 84; Inglehart and Norris, 2003: 125-126; Morales, 1999; Baum and Espírito-Santo, 2004). Although it covers only a very short period of time (1988-1991), figure 2.4 illustrates the gender gap in party membership.

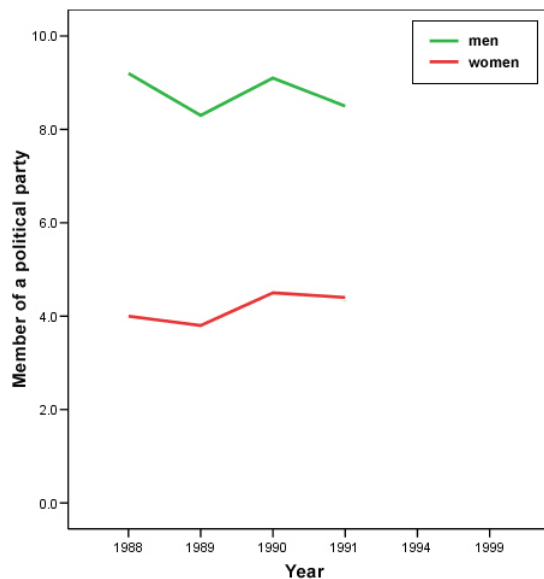


Figure 2.4: Percentage of respondents who are members of a party

Source: This figure is an adapted version of a figure published in Baum and Espirito-Santo (2007: 137). The data were taken from the Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File, 1990-1999.

Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Sidney Verba (2001) look for the sources of the gender gap in political activity in institutions such as home, school, the workplace, non-political organizations and churches. Two sets of factors apparently have a substantial impact: socio-economic characteristics and psychological engagement in politics. Concerning the former, the authors confirm that socio-economic differences, mainly education, prove to be one of the main causes of the gender gap in political activity, as women are, on average, disadvantaged in respect of education, income, and occupational status (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001: 359). The other very important set of factors has to do with political involvement, and the fact that women are less likely than men to be psychologically engaged in politics: they are less likely to be politically interested, informed, or efficacious (p. 360). Women also score lower on political knowledge¹⁵ (Atkeson and Rapoport, 2003; Frazer and Macdonald, 2003; Verba, Burns et al., 1997) and have a lower level of exposure to the news media, even in developed nations (Lorimor and Dunn, 1968-69; Christy, 1987; Bennett and Rademacher, 1997; Hansen, 1997; Bussemaker and Voet, 1998; Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001; Norris and Inglehart, 2001; Burns, 2002;

¹⁵ Jeffery J. Mondak and Mary R. Anderson (2004), however, confirmed the hypothesis that the knowledge gap is partly an artifact of how knowledge is measured. Men are usually more inclined to 'shout out the answers', and in surveys they tend to take higher risks by giving an answer. On the contrary, women tend to answer 'don't know' more often, even in domains where they know as much as men do.

Bernstein, 2005). Figure 2.5 clearly shows two examples of gender gaps in the level of political discussion and in media exposure over time.

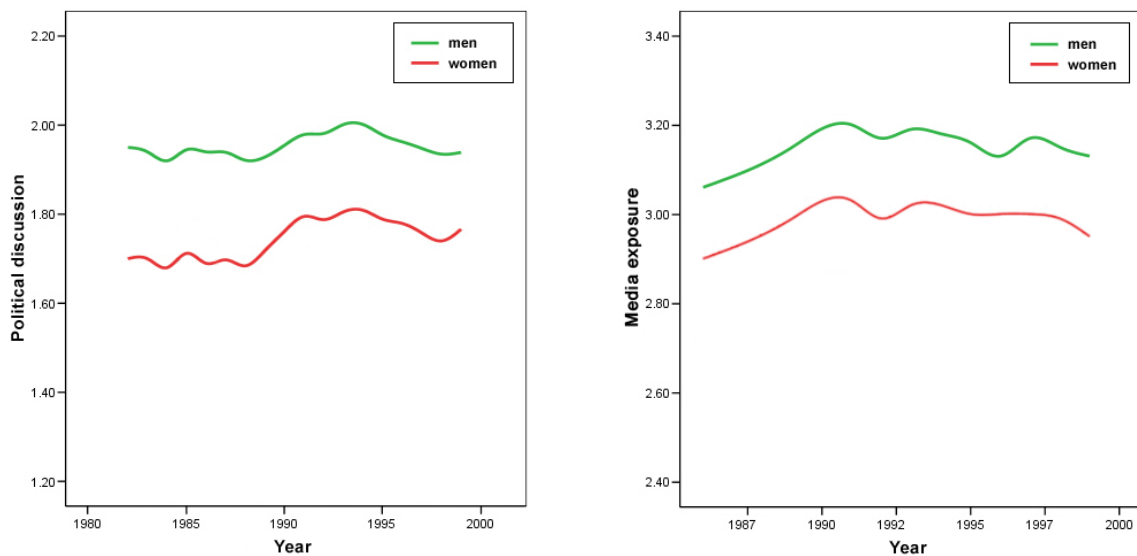


Figure 2.5: Average level of political discussion (scale 1 – 4) and of media exposure (scale 1 – 4)

Source: This figure is an adapted version of a figure published in Baum and Espírito-Santo (2007: 128, 130). The data were taken from the Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File, 1990-1999.

As can be observed in the two figures in this section, political attitudes regarding gender have not changed much in the last few decades (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001; Atkeson and Rapoport, 2003) and the gap is even wider than that in political activity.

The gender gap in political activity is, according to Anne Phillips, a sign of political inequality:

‘This is not to say that everyone must be equally enthralled by the political process: the interest in politics is unevenly distributed, as is the interest in sport or in jazz; and a free society is usually thought to imply a freedom not to engage in politics. (...) But where the levels of participation and involvement have coincided too closely with differences by class or gender or ethnicity, this has been taken as *prima facie* evidence of political inequality, even without further investigation of where this imbalance might lead’ (Phillips, 1995: 32).

Inequality in psychological engagement in politics is important not only because it is the main cause of the persistence of the gender gap in some forms of political participation (as just

mentioned), but also because it is one of the causes for the underrepresentation of women in political power. Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski (1995) argue that female underrepresentation might be more the result of the reduced number of potential candidates than of gender discrimination¹⁶.

That happens because the general lack of interest of women in politics leads to a tendency for young women (Lawless and Fox, 2005; Campbell and Wolbrecht, 2006)¹⁷ as well as adult women (Norris (ed.), 1997; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995; Fox and Lawless, 2004; Fox and Lawless, 2005; Lawless and Fox, 2005) to have less ‘political capital’¹⁸ and to feel less qualified and less motivated to run for office than men. The same applies if we consider both the ordinary citizens and the ‘candidate eligibility pool’, i.e. the group of citizens who are potential candidates¹⁹. A recent study corroborated this idea using a national survey of more than 2000 ‘potential candidates’ in 2008: ‘women are significantly more likely than men to dismiss their qualifications, and significantly less likely than their male counterparts to express self-efficacy to enter the electoral arena’ (Fox and Lawless, 2011: 70). The only group where no gender disparity in psychological engagement in politics can be found is among those who actually run for office (Fox and Lawless, 2004: 275).

This section demonstrates that there is a gender gap in both concepts –representation in political power and level of political involvement among citizens, and therefore raises the question of how the former influences the latter. The next section offers a description of the studies done on that area, covering also the concept that was kept out of this section: *evaluation of the political system*.

¹⁶ Although many studies have shown that women are significantly less likely than men to receive a political encouragement to run for Office (for example, Fox and Lawless, 2004: 275).

¹⁷ However, Marc Hooghe and Dietlind Stolle observed no difference between girls and boys regarding the level of anticipated participation. In fact, girls mention more acts than boys. This result may be due to the fact that the questionnaire that was analysed includes more social movement related forms of action than ordinary adult questionnaires usually do (2004: 18).

¹⁸ ‘*Political capital* can be understood to include the resources aspirants bring to the process. This may include not only financial assets but also such things as political connections, party connections, party experience, career flexibility, educational qualification and legislative skills’ (Norris (ed.), 1997: 13).

¹⁹ The definition of ‘candidate eligibility pool’ varies slightly from study to study but it tends to include all men and women whose professions are most likely to yield political candidacies for legislative office: law, business, education and politics (Fox and Lawless, 2004: 275).

2.2 – State of the field

This section presents the studies that focus on the impact the presence of female politicians has on citizens' political involvement and their evaluation of the political system and offers a summary of studies that centre on ethnic minorities.

The impact of female politicians

In the United States, and also, to a much lesser extent, in Europe, some research has been done into what would happen to women's *political engagement* if politics were not widely perceived as 'a man's game'. Although most such studies have observed a significant impact of the presence of women in the political environment, others have reached opposite results.

Jeffrey Koch (1997), Susan Hansen (1997), Virginia Sapiro and Pamela Johnston Conover (1997), and Angela High-Pippert and John Comer (1998) concentrated on the 1992 American elections. Since 1992 was proclaimed as the 'Year of the Woman' those elections are likely to have had a particular environment. Koch observed that women who live in states with a female Senate candidate had more probability of recalling the candidate's name, but only in an electoral environment (like the one offered by the 1992 elections) where the symbolic representation of women was a salient concern (1997). The same conclusion was reached by Susan Hansen (1997), who found that the existence of a female major-party candidate for Senate or governorship cancelled the gender gap in political proselytizing in the 1992 elections but not in other elections. In examining the 1992 elections, Sapiro and Conover (1997) observed that the gender gap in the level of attention to the news about electoral campaign and in the number of campaign acts disappeared in districts where a woman was candidate for the House of Representatives or Senate. High-Pippert and Comer reached similar findings: 'women represented by a woman [in Congress] are empowered with positive consequences for political involvement and participation, as well as political efficacy and political competence' (1998: 62). These findings suggest that when an advantageous environment complements the presence of women in political power, the mobilisation of female citizens is more probable. However, other studies reach positive results in different situations.

Nancy Burns, Kay Schlozman and Sidney Verba (2001) noticed that the presence of women in the political environment has an impact on women's political engagement²⁰. Quoting Karp and Banducci (2008: 106) about Burns, Schlozman et al. (2001)'s work:

‘Women are likely to be aware of female candidates and are more likely to be interested in the campaign when women compete. They estimate that the presence of even a single female contesting or occupying a state-wide public office is enough to close the gender gap in political interest and political knowledge by more than half; moreover if women were represented equally in politics, the disparity in political engagement would be wiped out’
(Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001: 354-355).

Lona Rae Atkeson found overwhelming support for such an impact on many political engagement variables when female candidates are visible and competitive (2003). The idea that the mere presence of female politicians might not be enough, but that they should be visible is also argued by Davil Campbell and Christina Wolbrecht (2006), the first authors to analyse this impact among adolescents. They found that the gender gap in adolescents' intention to engage in political activity as adults decreases (or disappears) when more attention is paid to women in politics nationally and when there are *viable* female candidates for Senate, House and Governor.

In contrast, Jennifer Lawless (2004) did not find much support for the symbolic representation effect, although like the previous authors she also studied the USA and used a very widely-used database, the National Elections Study (NES) from 1980 to 1998. Lawless analysed the impact that gender congruence between respondent and officeholders has on many women's political engagement. She perhaps did not get the same results because she did not try to isolate the effect of the visible or competitive female officeholders, but instead included them all simultaneously. However, Kathleen Dolan (2006) did a similar study using the same data, for 1990 – 2004, and while she did consider competitive races, she too found only limited support for the hypothesis that the existence of a candidate for the US House or Senate has an impact on women's political involvement.

Beth Reingold and Jessica Harrel (2009) made an important contribution to this literature by adding the importance of political parties. These researchers report that having more

²⁰ The same authors had previously tried (Verba, Burns et al., 1997) to prove this impact and had then reached a mixed result (a ‘*definitive maybe*’). That result gave them reasons to continue exploring the topic.

opportunities to vote for female candidates of the same party boosts four dimensions of women's political engagement namely campaign interest, political discussion, political persuasion and candidate recognition. 'Female politicians of the opposing party, in contrast, rarely have any significant effect on women's political engagement' (Reingold and Harrell, 2009: 11).

In Europe there are few similar studies. In fact, I am aware of only three studies dealing with the impact of female politicians on women's political engagement. The first, which focuses on the British case, refers to the topic only very briefly. It concludes that in seats where a female MP was elected to Parliament, not only was female turnout significantly higher, but other patterns of civic participation (such as the interest in campaigns or the likelihood to work for a candidate or party) were also affected (Norris, Lovenduski et al., 2004).

The second study is a cross national analysis that tests whether female members of parliament serve as political role models to adult and young women. After controlling for several parallel explanatory factors, it concludes that the percentage of female representation in national parliaments produces an impact on women's political engagement (Wolbrecht and Campbell, 2007).

The third study is a quite recent article, in which Jeffrey Karp and Susan Banducci (2008) analyse this impact across 35 countries, using data from the Comparative Study of Electoral System (CSES). The authors failed to observe any impact of a higher female representation in parliament on women's (and men's) level of political engagement. However, they did find that 'citizens [women and men] in countries with greater female representation are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works and more likely to believe that elections reflect the views of voters' (Karp and Banducci, 2008: 112). The latter two indicators correspond to the concept of *evaluation of the political system*, contrary to all other studies referred to so far, which focus on *political involvement*; however, there are other studies that centre on the *evaluation of the political system*.

Lonna Atkeson and Nancy Carrillo observed that between 1988 and 1998, the percentage of women in state legislatures (both upper and lower) produced an impact on women's feeling of external political efficacy (2007), i.e. in state legislatures where female presence is higher, fewer female citizens believe that 'public officials don't care much what people like me think'. Furthermore, the authors also report that the presence of a female governor is associated with not

only women's but also men's feeling of external political efficacy (Atkeson and Carrillo, 2007: 90).

Leslie Schwindt-Bayer and William Mishler using aggregated data on 31 democracies report that female descriptive representation enhances perception of legitimacy. More precisely, in countries where more women hold seats in the legislature, citizens tend to have more confidence in the legislature (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005: 425).

Finally, an already mentioned study (Lawless, 2004) did not find any signs of impact regarding *political involvement*, but did find some for *evaluation of the political system*. In fact, 'women feel better about their representation (i.e. they give more favourable approval ratings to their members of Congress) when they are represented by women, regardless of political party, party congruence, or socio-economic indicators' (Lawless, 2004: 88). Moreover, signs of impact are also observed on men's trust in federal government (Lawless, 2004: 89).

Zetterberg (2009) focused on Latin American countries in order to analyse the impact of quotas on women's political involvement. Although the author's main subject is not the actual presence of women in political power, he distinguishes between quotas effectively implemented and those which weren't, which is very similar. Zetterberg concludes that gender quotas are not associated with increased levels of political involvement, at least among Latin American women. The same author also considers an indicator of political trust, which belongs in my opinion to the *evaluation of the political system*. The results he reaches here are not more positive than the ones he got for *political involvement*.

The impact of politicians from an ethnic minority

The same kind of research exists concerning minority groups, mainly in the USA. Here too the results vary. Claudine Gay (2001), for example, observes that in districts with black congressional representation, the voting participation of black citizens was rarely affected, while Bobo and Gilliam (1990) demonstrated that the presence of African-American mayors in large cities significantly affected the political involvement of African-American citizens. A similar result is reached by Susan Banducci, Donovan et al. (2004) who analysed the impact of descriptive representation of minorities (African-Americans and Maori) in the US and New Zealand on the level of knowledge, contact with representatives and on their evaluation of governmental responsiveness. Claudine Gay observed that 'descriptive representation plays a real

albeit limited role in shaping constituents' perceptions of their government', particularly among whites, less so among African Americans (2002: 731). In fact, 'white constituents are more likely to recall the efforts of white legislators, more likely to approve of their job performance and rate them favourably (...). Both white and African-American constituents are more inclined to contact legislators who share their racial group membership' (Gay, 2002: 731). This suggests that race is more important for white than black people and is the opposite of what Howell and Fagan (1988) concluded. Since there is more than 10 years between both studies the results may be a sign that things are changing.

Using voting records of the 2004 general elections compiled by state officials in Louisiana and South Carolina, Kenny J. Whitby observed that descriptive representation has a positive and statistically significant effect on African-American voting (2007: 1018). Another piece of research also detects an impact of descriptive representation on African American's level of turnout that is conditional on party preference (Griffin and Keane, 2006). Therefore, when liberal African Americans are descriptively represented they are more likely to vote, while moderates and conservatives are less likely to vote. The authors argue that these results help to resolve disparate conclusions in prior studies.

Barreto, Segura et al. (2004) carried out an analogous piece of research on the U.S. Latino population. They found that in *majority-minority districts*²¹ (where Hispanics are able to elect a candidate of their choice) a higher percentage of Latinos tend to vote than in other districts. Also concerning Latinos, Adrian Pantoja and Gary Segura demonstrate that 'descriptively represented Latino citizens are less likely to articulate feelings of political alienation' (2003: 455).

²¹ 'The term Majority-minority simply refers to electoral districts drawn with a sufficient minority population so that the minority population can elect a candidate of choice, usually candidates of like race or ethnicity' (Barreto, Segura et al., 2004: 65).

Brief summary

There is a tendency for research on the symbolic impact of the presence of female politicians to concentrate on areas where differences are stronger, that is in forms of political involvement besides voting. However, this review of the literature shows that it is not only where there is a gender gap that an impact is likely to be observed. On the contrary, although there is no gender gap in the way women and men evaluate the political system (as mentioned before), the few studies that tackle this concept seem to have found that the presence of female politicians makes a difference, very often not only for women but also for men as well.

Furthermore, in most cases, for an impact to be observed in *political involvement*, something else besides the presence of female politicians has to be ensured: it may be an advantageous environment as the one observed in 1992 in the US (Koch, 1997; Hansen, 1997; Sapiro and Conover, 1997; High-Pippert and Comer, 1998), it may be the fact that the female politicians are visible and competitive (Atkeson, 2003; Campbell and Wolbrecht, 2006), or it may be a congruence between politicians and citizens' political party (Reingold and Harrell, 2009). On the other hand, for the impact on *evaluation of political system* the simple presence of female politicians seems to be enough.

Awareness of this literature makes more urgent the development of a theoretical framework that helps to understand what the different mechanisms behind the impact on each concept might be, as well as those behind the impact on each sex. That is the object of the next chapter.

3 – Theoretical framework

Basic assumption

The basic assumption of this thesis is that the overwhelming majority of the citizens in established democracies are aware of who their main politicians are, and of their sex. This is particular true in the case of the President or Prime Minister, but I argue that the same can be said about other important politicians, such as ministers. Citizens might not know their names, but most of them have at least a visual memory of them, which enables them to know if they are women or men. There seems to be some evidence in the literature that citizens do pay attention to the personal characteristics of their political leaders. Some studies have shown a connection between the socio-demographic characteristics of candidates and the electoral behaviour of citizens. According to these studies, candidate gender (McDermott, 1997; Rosenthal, 1995) or, more generally, socio-demographic characteristics (Cutler, 2002) serve as a shortcut for voter behaviour. In other words, voters tend to respond positively to socio-demographic similarity with party leaders (Cutler, 2002).

The tendency for voters to pay attention to the personal characteristics of their leaders might even be increasing, as a consequence of the presidentialization of politics (Webb and Poguntke, 2005). Paul Webb and Thomas Poguntke conclude that, although there are substantial cross national differences, in general modern democracies are increasingly following a presidential logic of governance through which leadership is becoming more central and more powerful.

There are however some voices against this position, namely Curtice and Costa Lobo, (forthcoming) who find strong leader effects only in the Southern European countries, such as Greece or Portugal.

The concept of descriptive representation

In her book *The Concept of Representation*, Hanna Pitkin (1967) makes a conceptual analysis of the term *representation*, where she systematizes the four dimensions of the concept that have mostly been used to today. These four dimensions were summarized by Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer and William Mishler (2005):

‘(...) *formal representation*, referring to the institutional rules and procedures through which representatives are chosen; *descriptive representation*, referring to the compositional similarity between representatives and the represented; *substantive representation or responsiveness*, referring to the congruence between representatives’ actions and the interests of the represented; and *symbolic representation*, referring to the represented’s feelings of being fairly and effectively represented’ (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005: 407).

Pitkin claims that substantive representation, which she also calls ‘acting for’, is the most important dimension of the concept (1967: 224). In her words, ‘representing means acting in the interests of the represented, in a manner responsive to them’ (1967: 209). She argues that the descriptive dimension introduces the importance of resembling one’s constituents, while the symbolic representation suggests the role of irrational belief and the importance of pleasing one’s constituents, but neither of the two concepts comprehend the idea that representation is for the represented – on their behalf, rather than, in their interest (1967: 111). The idea that representation is for the represented is brought into play by the substantive dimension that focuses on the nature of the activity; on the substance or content of acting for others (1967: 114).

Leslie Schwindt-Bayer and William Mishler (2005) did an empirical test on Hanna Pitkin’s theoretical approach to the concept of representation, by addressing the representation of women. They claim to be the first to test Pitkin’s integrated conception, as they consider the four dimensions of representation simultaneously (2005: 407). These authors gathered data that allowed them to measure the four dimensions in 31 democracies. They estimated the integrated model through structural equation modelling (SEM). Symbolic representation was measured through the answer to a question about citizens’ confidence in the legislature²². They confirmed a strong interconnection among the dimensions of representation (p. 423): *a*) formal representation has a powerful influence on the extent of women’s descriptive representation, policy responsiveness and symbolic representation and *b*) descriptive representation has influence on policy responsiveness and it enhances perceptions of legitimacy. However, they

²² They explain how the four dimensions were measured in page 415-416. I decided to highlight only the symbolic dimension, firstly because it is the less intuitive dimension and also because it is the one that is more important for this study.

failed to find an effect of women's policy responsiveness on women's perceptions of the legitimacy of the legislature, which suggest that substantive representation might not be as important as Pitkin supposed. I return to this study below.

These empirical findings support the main theoretical thesis defended by Anne Phillips in 1995, in the sense that she places more stress on the importance of descriptive representation than Pitkin did. However, she is also critical of an overly descriptive-based representation. She dedicates a considerable part of her book, *The Politics of Presence*, to refining arguments advanced by those who state that fair representation implies proportionate representation. This idea is based on the notion of group interests, i.e. the idea that women or minorities have specific interests and that their presence is therefore indispensable to guarantee that those interests are taken into account. Anne Phillips does not totally agree with this position as she claims that:

‘(...) interests may be gendered without any implication that all women share the same set of interests; racial and ethnic minorities may have a strong sense of themselves as a distinct social group, but this can coincide with an equally strong sense of division over policy goals; territorial minorities may see their own interests and concerns as ignored by the wider community, but still have to grapple with their internal diversity’ (Phillips, 1995: 145).

This is why Phillips argues that a combination of a politics of presence (concentrated on *who* the politicians are) and a politics of ideas (related to *what* policies, preferences they represent) is the ideal solution for dealing with political exclusion (1995: 25). She affirms that ‘representatives who are in no way accountable are not representatives at all’ (p. 156), but the representation of people only in accordance to their expressed ideas is also unsatisfactory. Phillips claims that the gender and racial composition of elected assemblies also matters, regardless of the ideas of those representatives (p. 158). This happens for two reasons. The first has to do with the hopeful relative autonomy of the representatives: ‘if we condemn our politicians to tedious reiteration of what we told them to say, we refuse the possibility of any later transformation’ (p. 159). Phillips advocates that democracies need other things besides accountability: ‘we also need to be represented in ways that will get new issues on to the political agenda, and will challenge the false consensus that keeps so many out’ (p. 158). The second reason is that the programmes offered by political parties (mainly catch-all parties) can never capture the full range of relevant issues, and therefore ‘it becomes necessary to pursue

some additional form of representation that deals with as yet unspecified areas of concern' (p. 157).

Jane Mansbridge refines these arguments, by referring to uncrystallized interests, i.e. the issues that have not been on the political agenda long, on which candidates have not taken public stands, and around which political parties are not organized (1999: 643). The author argues that in these cases, '(...) descriptive representatives are, other things being equal, more likely than nondescriptive representatives to act as their descriptive constituents would like them to act' (p. 646). Mansbridge gives the example of gender issues, such as sexual harassment and violence against women that are politically salient but still quite uncrystallized²³. 'It is not surprising, then, that women legislators have usually been the ones to bring these issues to the legislative table' (1999: 647).

Mansbridge presents three more arguments to defend the 'selective' form²⁴ of descriptive representation in special situations. The first one is when historical circumstances have interfered with an adequate communication between members of two groups, as happens between whites and ethnic minorities. 'A history of dominance and subordination typically breeds inattention, even arrogance, on the part of the dominant group and distrust on the part of the subordinate group' (1999: 641). The second and third arguments have more to do with the symbolic consequences of the descriptive representation: 'the construction of social meaning' and 'de facto legitimacy'. According to the former, if a group is represented in political power it increases the degree to which the society as a whole sees it as capable of ruling (Mansbridge, 1999: 650). According to 'de facto legitimacy' instead, seeing proportional numbers of members of their group exercising the responsibility of ruling can make citizens feel as if they are present in the deliberations and hence increase the legitimacy of the system²⁵.

²³ Issues of race are somewhat more crystallized in the US than issues of gender (Mansbridge, 1999: 646).

²⁴ Mansbridge claims that there are two kinds of descriptive representation that are often mixed up: the 'microcosmic' and the 'selective' forms. In the microcosmic representation, the entire assembly is designed to form a microcosm, or representative sample, of the electorate (1999: 631). While in the selective form, 'institutional design gives selected groups greater descriptive representation (...) in order to bring the proportions of those groups in the legislature closer to their percentages in the population' (1999: 632).

²⁵ Jane Mansbridge is, however, not as favorable to descriptive representation as it might seem from this text. She is for example contrary to the application of quotas or to the implementation of majority-minority districts, defending more fluid forms of descriptive representation. She prefers cumulative voting in at-large districts, systems of proportional representation with party lists or other 'enabling devices', such as schools for potential candidates (1999: 652-653).

Although not very common, none of these arguments are new. At the beginning of the 1980's Virginia Sapiro raised similar ideas about female representation. She argued that 'increased representation of people who 'look like' women will effect powerful symbolic changes in politics', as 'women and men continue to think of politics as a male domain' (Sapiro, 1981: 712). Virginia Sapiro, as well as Charles Taylor (1992: 25) and Anne Phillips (1995: 39) belong to the group of scholars who have reflected on the psychological consequences of being excluded from political power.

What Virginia Sapiro, Charles Taylor and Anne Phillips have in common is that they are all more concentrated on the consequences of exclusion on the underrepresented group than on the society as a whole or on the general functioning of politics. Anne Phillips said that: 'The case for equal or proportionate presence is not, on the whole, about making liberal democracies more stable, or pre-empting the mass alienation of citizens who might otherwise take to the streets' (1995: 40). Also Charles Taylor, referring to the world of education, argued that 'the reason for these proposed changes is not, or not mainly, that all students may be missing something important through the exclusion of a certain gender or certain races or cultures, but rather that women and students from the excluded groups are given, either directly or by omission, a demeaning picture of themselves, as though all creativity and worth inhered in males of European provenance' (1992: 65). In contrast, Jane Mansbridge, despite concurring with the arguments presented by the three scholars, considers the effects of social meaning on the perceptions and actions of members of the more advantaged groups to be important: 'my aim, in short, is changing the psychology of the 'haves' far more than the psychology of the 'have-nots'', because 'there are sometimes more of them, and they are more powerful' (1999: 651).

Potential causal mechanisms

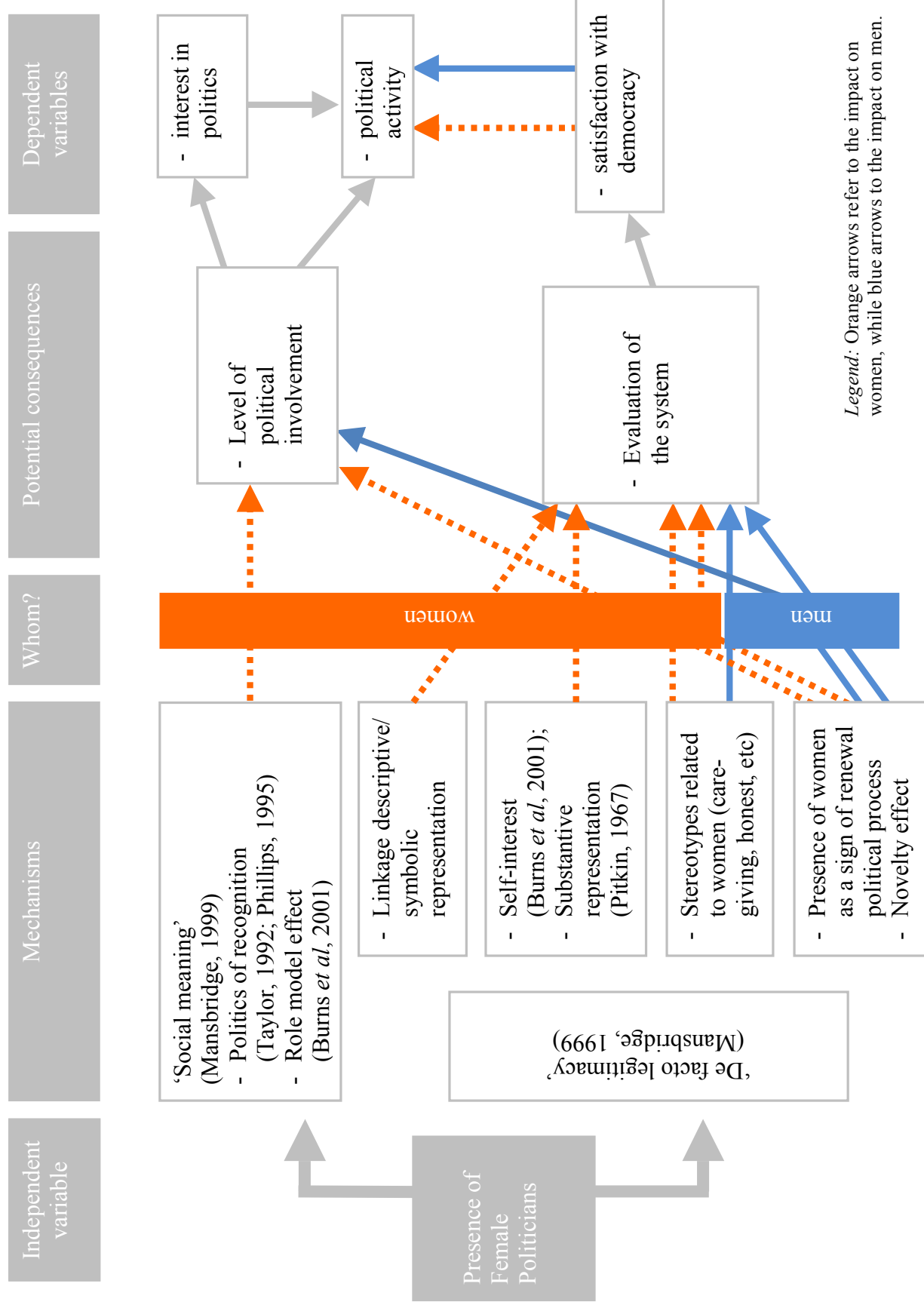
Figure 3.1 below presents a schema of potential mechanisms acting behind the impact that the presence of female politicians might have on citizens' political attitudes. Some of the mechanisms that apply to women (orange arrows) and men (blue arrows) are supposedly different and therefore they will be described separately.

Impact on women

I expect the presence of female politicians to have a positive impact on two features of the way women deal with politics: 1) level of political involvement, and 2) evaluation of the system. I argue that there are two main mechanisms behind those impacts (see figure 3.1), both of them inspired in Jane Mansbridge's work (1999)²⁶. The first one is 'the construction of social meaning' and the second one 'de facto legitimacy'. According to the former, the increased political inclusion of underrepresented groups enhances the degree to which the society in question sees that group as able to govern. According to the latter, the presence in political power from members of an underrepresented group improves that group's feelings towards the political system. Mansbridge presents four situations in which according to her it would make sense to adopt fluid forms of descriptive representation and the two mentioned mechanisms are two of those situations.

²⁶ However, I could not find any text where she develops further these two concepts or a place where she tries to apply these concepts to men – although she suggests that they should apply to the whole society.

Figure 3.1: Schema of potential mechanisms behind the impact



The construction of social meaning

The idea of the construction of social meaning argues that, in certain historical conditions, to be part of a group implies carrying ‘(...) the historically embedded meaning “Persons with these characteristics do not rule”, with the possible implication, “Persons with these characteristics are not able to (fit to) rule”’ (Mansbridge, 1999: 648-649). Similar arguments were previously developed by Anne Philips:

‘when those charged with making the political decisions are predominantly drawn from one of the two sexes or one of what may be numerous ethnic groups, this puts the others in the category of political minors. They remain like children, to be cared for by those who know best’ (1995: 39).

Also Charles Taylor had reflected on the psychological consequences of being unrecognized by saying that:

‘(...) a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being’ (1992: 25).

This means that all the groups that are descriptively underrepresented in politics may internalize the idea that they are not able to be politically active, that politics is not for them and may therefore develop a much weaker interest in politics than those groups that are well represented. This premise seems to fit women particularly well since, as we saw in chapter 2, many empirical studies have demonstrated that there is still a significant gender gap both in the feeling of political efficacy, i.e. in the feeling that one has a word to say in politics and in the psychological engagement in politics (see for example, Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001: 360). Much recent scholarship has attributed the gender gap in political activity (in part) to deeply embedded patterns of traditional gender socialization (for example, Conway, Steuernagel et al., 1997; Atkeson and Rapoport, 2003; Fox and Lawless, 2003; Lawless and Fox, 2005; Verba, Schlozman et al., 2005; Moore, 2005). There is a widespread belief that the types of family, school and society where children are raised play a determinant role in the way children are socialized. In general, boys tend to be better prepared for activities that are more potentially connected to being politically active. However, most of the studies on the political socialization of adolescents or children are

quite old²⁷. Fred Greenstein, Diana Owen and Jack Dennis are examples of scholars who have worked on this topic. At the beginning of the 1960's, Fred Greenstein looked at sex-related political differences in childhood. He observed that there is a subtle and complex process in which, through differential opportunities, rewards and punishments, a sex identity is acquired. Later in childhood, when all children become more politically aware, the sex identity will lead girls to lag consistently behind boys in political development (1961: 369). More than twenty years later, Owen and Dennis also found some evidence that the distinctions between male and female political orientations can be traced back to childhood (1988: 39).

Studies like the one by Blema Steinberg (2001) acknowledge that things have not changed much in this respect. Looking at the family backgrounds of women who came to the top level of political power in the period of 1960-1989, the author concludes that there is an overrepresentation of first-born children. The explanation for this has to do with the fact that 'parents without a first-born son seem less likely to discourage their daughters from pursuing careers traditionally reserved to men. The daughters become 'honorary sons' and the recipients of the parental attention and guidance an older brother would otherwise receive' (Steinberg, 2001: 100).

Political socialization depends on many factors, but the different political socialization of boys and girls is partly a result of the underrepresentation of women in high political positions. The idea behind this potential mechanism is that if underrepresented groups internalize the idea that politics is not for them, and that group becomes represented in political power it increases the degree to which the society as a whole sees it as capable of ruling (Mansbridge, 1999: 650). Here I am not – at least directly - concerned about the way the presence of female politicians changes men's perceptions of women's capacities to rule, but more with the way women themselves see and feel their own capacities to rule. Therefore, a more specific theory may be applied – the role model effect – according to which visible women in politics might function as role models in the sense that they carry a kind of symbolic significance, by sending the message to women citizens that politics is an inclusive domain; that it is open to them (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001: 351). Following the ideas set out earlier, I argue that through the mechanisms of social meaning, politics of

²⁷ According to Timothy Cook political socialisation has been branded as less worthy of study because it is difficult to study (1985).

recognition and the role model effect, the presence of female politicians has a positive influence on women's level of political involvement (see figure 3.1).

De facto legitimacy

Linkage descriptive/symbolic representation

Regarding the second mechanism suggested by Jane Mansbridge (1999), the 'de facto legitimacy', seeing proportional numbers of members of their group exercising the responsibility of ruling can make citizens feel as if they are present in the deliberations and hence increase the legitimacy of the system. Jane Mansbridge was probably not the first person to come up with this idea. In her paper (Mansbridge, 1999: 650) she quotes many other authors, including Gosnell 1948: 131, cited in Pitkin [1967] 1972: 78; Kymlicka 1993: 83, and others²⁸. This idea implies a link between two of Hanna Pitkin's four dimensions of the concept of representation: *descriptive* and *symbolic representation* (1967). Both dimensions refer to the 'standing for', but while the *descriptive* dimension introduces the importance of resembling one's constituents, the *symbolic* relates to whether the represented feel like they are being fairly and effectively represented.

According to this mechanism women feel closer to politics simply because someone similar to them is part of it. Claudine Gay, quoting Abney and Hutcheson²⁹, wrote that 'public officials 'may be agents of opinion change simply as a result of the images they project', regardless of the policies they pursue' (2002: 731).

Self-interest or substantive representation

The second mechanism is based on a more rational and strategic line of thinking, according to which women bring something new into politics. According to this argument, the presence of women contesting or occupying public office might suggest to female citizens that, as public

²⁸ She also quotes Anne Phillips (1995). But I understand Phillips in a completely different way. In my opinion she concurs with Jane Mansbridge's social meaning argument, but not with the 'de facto legitimacy'. In fact she wrote: 'This more symbolic element in representation is sometimes linked to arguments about making political institutions more legitimate, more obviously and visibly representative of those they pretend to represent. But this is an explicitly pragmatic argument, aimed at the weak spots of those who prefer to keep things as they are. The case for equal or proportionate presence is not, on the whole, about making democracies more stable, or pre-empting the mass alienation of citizens who might otherwise take to the streets' (Phillips, 1995: 40). It is true that Anne Philips mentions (1995: 189; 1998: 237-239) that changing the composition of elected assemblies is part of a project for increasing and enhancing democracy. However, I think that she refers to a kind of deliberative process which might become possible because it is closer to women's way of doing politics.

²⁹ Abney, Glen and John D. Hutcheson (1981), 'Race, representation and trust'. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 45 (1): 91 – 100, p. 100.

officials, women will produce ‘women friendly public policies’ (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001: 352) and that might have a positive influence on female citizens’ satisfaction with democracy and on their trust in the system³⁰.

This tackles the most important dimension of the concept of representation according to Pitkin, the *substantive* dimension that focuses on the nature of the activity; on the substance or content of ‘acting for’ others (1967: 114). According to Pitkin, ‘the representative system must look after the public interest and be responsive to public opinion, except insofar as non-responsiveness can be justified in terms of the public interest’ (1967: 224).

In contrast to Hanna Pitkin, Anne Phillips places more stress on the importance of descriptive representation even if she is also, as we saw before, critical of an overly descriptive-based representation. But does it make sense to think that women defend different ideas from men? Lonna Atkeson and Nancy Carrillo quote some authors³¹ to show reasons why we would expect women to have different priorities from men (2007: 82). Among other things, women politicians tend to have had careers in education, while men are more likely to come from business backgrounds. Moreover, women spend more time involved in family-related issues. But do women and men differ in the kind of political issues they emphasise and the types of policies they try to implement?

In the last decade, many studies have been done on the substantive impact of female representation, i.e. on the impact that the presence of women in political power produces on the policies preferences. Although some studies conclude that women make no difference both to meeting the needs, demands, and interests of women (Tremblay and Pelletier, 2000) and to contributing to the election of more women (Studlar and McAllister, 2002), in general there is a tendency to believe that women do make a difference in regards to policies, and that they tend to defend more female-friendly policies (for example, Bird, 2002; Childs and Withey, 2004; Conway, Steuernagel et al., 1997; Mateo Diaz, 2002; Kittilson, 2008; Lovenduski and Norris, 2003).

³⁰ While the authors suggest that the impact is on women citizens’ psychological engagement in politics, I argue that it makes more sense to think that the impact occurs on the evaluation women citizens do of the political system, and that the way they evaluate the system might have indirectly an impact on their psychological engagement in politics.

³¹ All the quoted authors can be found in Atkeson and Carrillo, 2007: 82.

Impact on men

If there are not many theories that support the impact that the presence that female politicians might have on female citizens, there are even fewer accounting for that impact on male citizens. The situation is rather similar among the empirical papers; there are almost no studies on the effect that the presence of female politicians have on men. A few of them (Hansen, 1997; Lawless, 2004; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005; Karp and Banducci, 2008) found an impact on men apparently by chance, but did not explore this area. Why does it make sense to think that the presence of female politicians might have an influence on men – maybe on their political involvement and on their satisfaction with democracy?

Two ideas are plausible. The first is connected to the stereotypes that exist in society concerning women (care-giving, peaceful, etc.). According to this argument, female politicians may contribute to improving the evaluation that citizens make of the political system. The second idea is related to the novelty effect or “sign of renewal” that the entrance of women in politics might suggest, which may therefore enhance both citizens’ political involvement but also their evaluation of the political system. Both possibilities apply to women and men. Let us focus on each of these mechanisms.

Regarding the former idea – *the stereotypes* – a considerable number of scholars of electoral behaviour go beyond the ballot box to analyse the perception that voters have of male and female candidates. Most of these authors use experimental designs to find that gender stereotyping still exists in the electoral environment (for example, Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993; McDermott, 1998; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Herrnson, Lay et al., 2003; Fox and Oxley, 2005). According to them, ‘voters use candidate gender to make inferences about candidate traits, beliefs, and issue positions’ (Sanbonmatsu, 2002: 20);

‘Typical female traits such as warmth, sensitivity, and compassion were thought to qualify female candidates for dealing better with compassion issues, such as education, health care, and the problems of the poor and aged. Assertiveness, aggressiveness, and self-confidence, typical male traits, were thought to aid male candidates in coping better with military or police crises’ (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993: 140).

Another factor that may have implications for gender stereotyping is the specific environment in which the election takes place. Although they refer again to electoral behaviour, Fox and Oxley conclude that the electoral context interacts with voter attitudes

towards candidates in important ways (2005: 543)³². Heather Ondercin and Jeffrey Bernstein demonstrate that electoral gender gaps arise from campaign-level factors (2007).

In general, we may summarize the literature on gender stereotypes by saying that voters tend to see female candidates differently, though not necessarily as better or worse than male candidates (McDermott, 1998: 899). However, another possibility is that, in some situations, citizens do see some advantage in having women in politics. ‘Since women, as comparative newcomers to electoral politics, are less tainted by old style politics (Dolan, 1998), and because gender stereotypes may characterize women politicians as being more honest or ethical than their male counterparts, on the whole, women may attract more votes than men when placed in similarly competitive candidacies’ (Black and Erickson, 2003: 82) – but see King and Leigh (2010) who observe that a ‘gender penalty’ against women has been a consistent feature of Australian federal elections since 1903, although it has been decreasing since the 1980s. Besides potentially attracting votes (which is not my main concern here) gender stereotypes may also lead to an improvement in the evaluations that citizens make of politicians and/or politics.

According to the second theoretical argument – *the sign of renewal or novelty effect* – the simple fact that new groups are or may be entering the system may appeal to citizens a sense of curiosity and therefore increase people’s interest: ‘(...) just having a woman vying for visible public office is itself a sufficient novelty to generate greater interest in the election’ (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001: 349-350). This novelty effect may be enhanced by the media (although some studies conclude otherwise) (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001: 350). Regarding France, there was a dramatically increased level of turnout in the 2007 French presidential elections (where Ségolène Royal ran for office against Nicolas Sarkozy). There were undoubtedly many explanations for this fact but one may be the presence of a female candidate (Murray, 2008: 487).

Connected to the *sign of renewal* argument there is the idea of an open system: ‘a representative body that shares physical characteristics with its constituency symbolically appears more open to input from more citizens and appears better able to understand citizen interests’ (Atkeson and Carrillo, 2007: 81). It may therefore be perceived as a fairer system and be evaluated more positively. It may therefore be perceived as a fairer system and be evaluated more positively.

³² For example, in the case of the Fox and Oxley study, an environment friendly to women’s issues occasionally contributed to the election of women (2005: 543).

Part II: Evaluation of the system (*de facto* legitimacy)

4 – Who wants more female MPs in Portugal and why? Analysis of four possible reasons

Introduction

... because of the quality of democracy. If there are as many of us or even more of us than them, there is no reason for us not to have the same level of representation³³.

Ana Benavente (PS politician, personal interview in 2005)

The presence of more women in politics is crucial (...) The male political agenda is spent so the female political agenda or what women bring into the political agenda is very important and coincides with the essential subject of this decade. I have no doubt that it reorganizes the political space³⁴.

Maria José Nogueira Pinto (CDS politician, personal interview in 2005)

Either because of the quality of democracy or due to the new elements they bring into politics, most female politicians have no doubt that their presence in political power is in some way beneficial. Whether or not citizens share the same opinion, and the reasons that might bring them to do so, is a less clear topic. Analysing the reasons why some citizens are in favour of having more women in political power is an interesting way of getting a first insight on the impact that female politicians might have on citizens – the ultimate goal of this thesis (see figure 4.1). Although it cannot be argued that the reasons evoked by citizens, in abstract, correspond to the reasons why that impact occurs in reality, it is likely that they are similar. The goal of this chapter is therefore to understand *why* some citizens are willing to see more

³³ Free translation of the original text: ‘Porque acho que é a qualidade da democracia que está em causa. Se nós somos tantas ou mais do que eles, não há nenhuma razão para não termos a mesma representação’.

³⁴ Free translation of the original text: ‘É fundamental a presença de mulheres na política (...) A agenda política masculina está exaurida, portanto a agenda política feminina ou aquilo que a mulher traz para a agenda política é fundamental e coincide com temática essencial desta década, não é? Não tenho dúvida nenhuma e reorganiza o espaço político’.

women in political power, with the final goal of getting a first glance on *how* female politicians are likely to influence citizens' political attitudes.

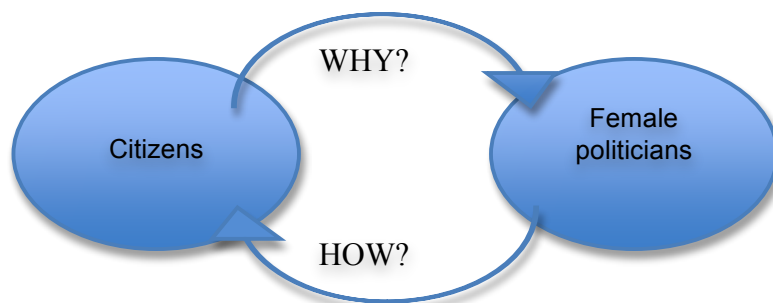


Figure 4.1: Dual relationship between citizens and female politicians

The strategy followed by this chapter (i.e. looking at the relationship between citizens and politicians from the opposite perspective – compared to the rest of the thesis) makes sense because even harder than understanding whether or not there is an impact is understanding the mechanisms through which it happens. This is the case because it implies figuring out who the people that were affected by the presence of female politicians are, and secondly analysing how the female politician(s) provoked the referred impact on them.

This chapter focuses on Portugal – a country that only gave women the right to vote in 1976 but saw its level of female representation increase significantly in the last decades (it went from 5% in 1976 to 30% in 2009). Furthermore, in 2006 a parity law was approved aiming at having a minimum percentage of 33% for each gender. A study done in 2005 observed that the majority of the population was favourable to the implementation of the measure (Martins and Teixeira, 2005) and the same was confirmed using data from 2008 (Baum and Espírito-Santo, forthcoming). This suggests that the Portuguese population is willing to see the presence of women in political power increasing. What remain unclear however are the reasons that lead to this position. Four potential reasons explaining why some citizens may be in favour of higher female representation are tested, namely, 1) those citizens do a positive evaluation of women as political leaders, 2) they perceive the quality of democracy to be better when there are more female politicians, 3) they believe that male politicians should represent mainly men and female politicians mainly women and finally, 4) citizens think that women represent their interests better than men.

The chapter uses data from a representative sample of the Portuguese population, collected in 2008 (Freire and Viegas, 2009)³⁵ and is organized as follows: after presenting the state of the literature and the theoretical framework that presents four potential reasons, a statistical analysis is developed to test those four reasons. The analysis starts by presenting some descriptive statistics that allow a better understanding of the general positions of the Portuguese population regarding the presence of women in politics. Then, an ordered logistic regression and a binary logistic regression are performed aiming to test those four reasons and finally, predicted probabilities are presented. In the conclusions, a bridge will be made between the reasons that attempt to account for why citizens are in favour of having more women in politics and the mechanisms that may operate behind the impact of the presence of women in political power.

State of the field

As said before, there is very little research on how the impact of female politicians on citizens' political attitudes is produced, i.e. on the process behind the impact. To my knowledge, only two studies have ever attempted to explore the mechanisms concerned with the impact.

Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Sidney Verba (2001) mention (but do not test) two possible mechanisms: the symbolic significance of female politicians and the self-interest of the women represented. According to the first mechanism women feel closer to politics simply because someone similar to them is part of it. The second mechanism is based on a more instrumental line of thinking. This argument hypothesizes that the presence of female politicians might suggest to female citizens that more 'women friendly public policies' will be approved (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001: 352). Incidentally, the same authors suggest two further justifications as to why citizens might not be indifferent to the presence of women in politics. The first is the novelty effect according to which the fact that women are new within the political world could increase citizens' attention to women in politics (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001: 349-350). The second one, which would apply only to female citizens, mentions the processes of mobilization and the supposition that female voters are more likely to be contacted when a woman is running for office (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001: 350).

³⁵ I am extremely thankful to André Freire and to José Manuel Leite Viegas for having agreed to include some extra questions in their questionnaire.

David Campbell and Christina Wolbrecht (2006) try to find out the mechanisms through which female candidates serve as role models for adolescents, i.e. how they contribute to increase adolescents' intention to engage in political activity as adults. However these authors focus on a different kind of mechanism, more practical or intervening mechanisms, and not so much psychological ones. They consider three kinds of mechanisms: 1) *political roles for women*, in which they investigate whether or not female adolescents see politics as an appropriate arena for women; 2) *government responsiveness*, i.e. if female candidates lead girls to have greater confidence in political institutions; and 3) *political discussion*, if the presence of female candidates increases girls' engagement in politics. They conclude that the third mechanism, and especially political conversations with parents, accounts for most of the role model effect (p. 244).

Research on gender and politics in Portugal, though expanded in the last decade, remains rather underdeveloped. There are some important studies on the condition of women in general (e.g., Cabral, 1997; Ferreira, 1998³⁶), and some others which focus on women's status in politics (e.g., Baum and Espírito-Santo, 2004; Bettencourt and Silva Pereira, 1995; Campos, 2001; Coutinho, 1991; Espada, 2002; Silva, 1994; Viegas and Faria 2001). There are also a few that look at the implications of political institutions for female participation in politics (Martins and Teixeira, 2005; Viegas and Faria 2001; Espírito-Santo 2007). However, there is no study looking at the impact that the presence of female politicians might produce on citizens' political attitudes, and definitely not on the potential mechanisms behind that impact. The study of Meirinho Martins and Pequito Teixeira (2005) was the first to my knowledge to question the Portuguese public on their opinion of female politicians. Although rather descriptive, that study pointed to the fact that the Portuguese had equal trust in male and female politicians and that more than half the nation favoured the implementation of a quota system in parliament.

I am not aware of any study on the reasons that might lead citizens to argue for a higher presence of women in politics, neither on Portugal nor anywhere else.

Theoretical framework

Figure 4.2 below presents four potential reasons justifying why citizens may be in favour of having more women in political power. These reasons consist of (or are very similar to) the mechanisms that were presented before in figure 3.1 of chapter 3. But while there we were

³⁶ An updated version of this article is about to be published.

thinking of them as mechanisms that might work after the presence of female politicians became a fact, here they are presented as hypothetical reasons for wanting more women in political power. As in figure 3.1, while some reasons apply to women only (orange arrows), others apply to both women and men (blue arrows).

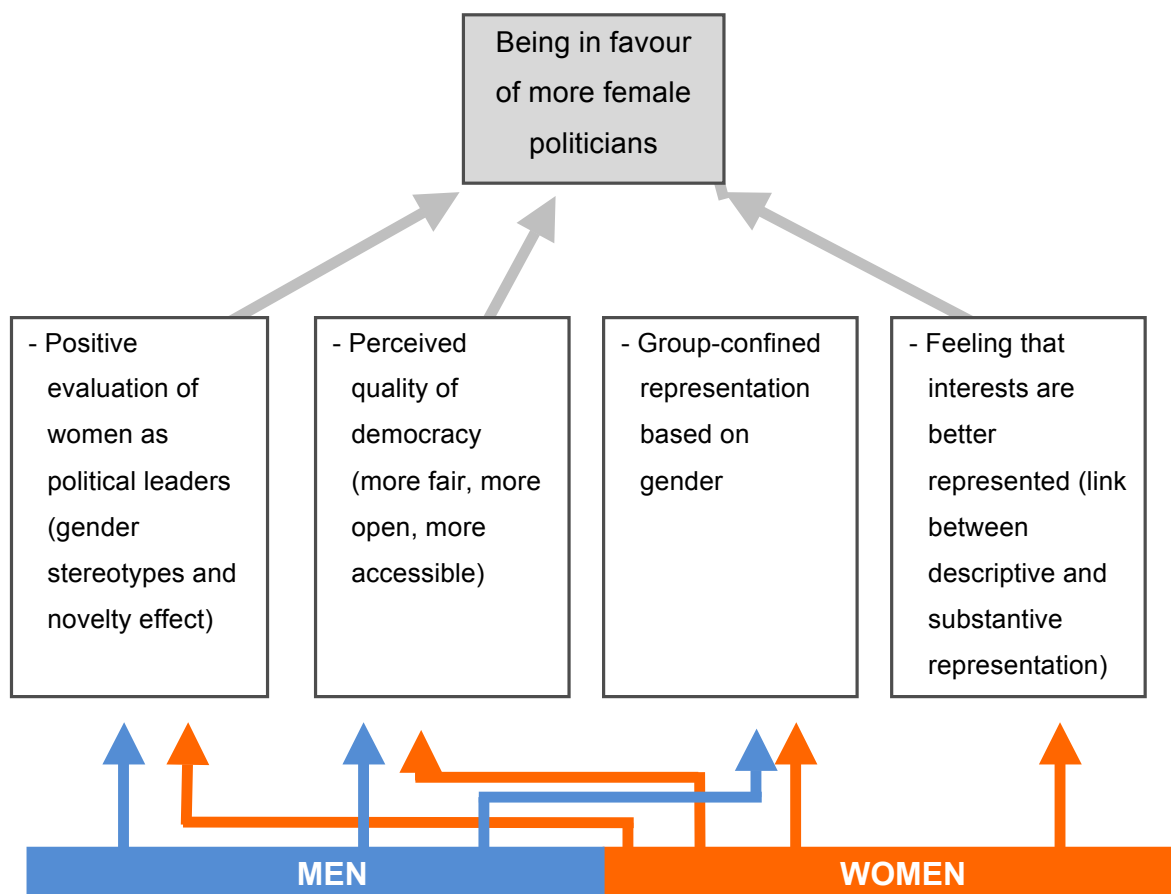


Figure 4.2: Potential reasons explaining why citizens may be in favour of having more women in political power

Women: Feeling that interests are better represented

According to this argument women are in favour of more female politicians because they think they represent their interests better. In other words, this variable tests whether or not female citizens believe that there is a link between the presence of women in politics (descriptive representation) and the attention to women's policy concerns (substantive representation).

As stated in chapter 3, in the last decade, many studies have been done on the impact that the presence of women in political power produces on substantive representation of women (Celis, Childs et al., 2008: 99). A more recent research agenda underlines that the

most important issue is not whether female politicians produce more women-friendly policies but ‘where, why, and how does substantive representation of women occur?’ (Celis, Childs et al., 2008). This chapter supports and overall follows this research agenda but focuses on a slightly different question. It is not concerned with who the actors are or what motivation they have; rather it is concerned with the expectation that female citizens have of female politicians. And in fact, in terms of issues, the public tends to see female politicians as especially concerned about women’s rights (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993; Sanbonmatsu 2002).

Women and men: Positive evaluation of women as leaders

According to this argument, citizens (both women and men) might want to have more women in political power because they evaluate women as political leaders more positively than they evaluate men, or at least they see some advantages in having women in power. Two main reasons may justify this position: the gender stereotypes that exist in our societies and the novelty effect that having women in power might cause.

Gender stereotypes

Although some of the first investigations on voter bias found some evidence of female disadvantage when running for office³⁷, the most recent research has found that women candidates tend to perform just as well as men (among others, Dolan, 1998; Dolan, 2004; Fox and Oxley, 2003; Seltzer, Newman et al., 1997). Being a woman might even have some advantages. As Herrnson, Lay and Stokes’s research on U.S. House and state legislative candidates says ‘(...) being a female candidate can be an asset. When women choose to capitalize on gender stereotypes by focusing on issues that are favourably associated with women candidates and targeting women or other social groups, they improve their prospects of electoral success’ (2003: 251). It seems a fact that gender stereotyping still exists in the electoral environment (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993; McDermott, 1998; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Herrnson, Lay et al., 2003; Fox and Oxley, 2003). According to those studies female candidates are seen as more compassionate and caring while male candidates are seen as more logical, rational, and able to provide strong leadership (Koch, 2000: 417)³⁸.

³⁷ References to these studies can be found in Black and Erickson, 2003: 83.

³⁸ Koch (2000: 417) refers to the following studies: Kahn 1994; Leeper 1991; Matland 1994; Sapiro 1982.

Although typical female traits were not necessarily seen as favourable for a politician (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993), there are reasons to think that things might have changed. It might be that in the last 20 years, the rise in challenging typical gender roles – which (among other things) leads men to allow themselves to have less typically male traits – contributed to a bigger valorisation of ‘typical female traits’ (such as being compassionate or caring³⁹), or to avoid relating them so clearly to women. On the other hand, while some typically female traits might not always be positively associated with being a good leader, there are also others that clearly are, namely the fact that ‘female politicians are seen as more honest and ethical than are male politicians’ (Kahn 1992; Sapiro 1981-82, quoted by Smith, Powers et al., 2005: 117). In a world in which corruption has growing importance, both female and male citizens may have a greater appreciation for honesty. As referred to in chapter 7, the gender stereotype of women as ‘cleaner’ might have been determinant to Merkel’s election for leader of the CDU in 2000.

Novelty effect

Female politicians may be more positively evaluated as political leaders simply because they are new to politics. This is what we call the novelty effect. According to this theoretical argument, the entrance of women may be seen as a sign of renewal since they are less associated with old-fashioned politics (Dolan, 1998).

Women and men: Group-confined representation based on gender

According to this argument, both women and men are in favour of more women in their National Parliaments because they believe that the MPs should mainly represent the ‘groups’ to which they belong. Blacks should represent blacks, male MPs men, female MP women, and so on. If that is the belief, it makes sense to wish a more varied composition of the National Parliament in order to assure that everybody is represented. In this case, we are particularly interested in the gender-based representation.

This reason is not totally similar to its respective mechanism introduced in figure 3.1, of chapter 3, which is the link between descriptive and symbolic representation, according to Hanna Pitkin’s definition (1967). While the *descriptive* dimension introduces the

³⁹ Even regarding issues, if we consider that men are changing (doing more housework, spending more time with their children, etc.), it makes sense to assume that they are starting to interest themselves more in ‘typical female issues’.

importance of resembling one's constituents, the *symbolic* relates to whether the represented feel like they are being fairly and effectively represented. There is a crucial difference between the *reason* (presented in this chapter) and the *mechanism* (presented in chapter 3). The latter is based on a much more irrational, spontaneous effect provoked by the fact that citizens and politicians share some characteristics. It suggests that citizens do not use any rational thoughts to feel better represented, or to evaluate the political system more positively; it simply happens and it cannot be avoided. The *reason* on the contrary suggests a normative and rational thought or belief: blacks *should* represent blacks; or women *should* represent women, and so on.

Woman and men: Perceived quality of democracy

According to this argument both women and men may be willing to see more women in politics because the fact that they are not there is a sign that the system is not working properly. Not by chance, the level of presence of women in political power is often considered an indicator of the quality of democracy: '(...) increases in descriptive representation directly strengthen the legitimacy of the legislative body because it appears more open and accessible' (Mansbridge, 1999; Phillips, 1998, quoted by Atkeson and Carrillo, 2007:81).

This *reason* does not correspond to one of the mechanisms of figure 3.1, chapter 3, since evaluation of the quality of democracy is actually a dependent variable. There, it is hypothesized that citizens evaluate democracy more positively when there are more female politicians. Here I am looking at whether the 'counterfactual' of that sentence is true, i.e. if the absence of women in political power is seen as a sign of a poor level of democracy.

Contextualization of the Portuguese case

Although immediately after the 2005 legislative elections the percentage of women in the Portuguese parliament was 21.3%, throughout the time it increased considerably due to substitutions. In fact, in 2008 (see figure 4.3) it had reached the 29% mark.

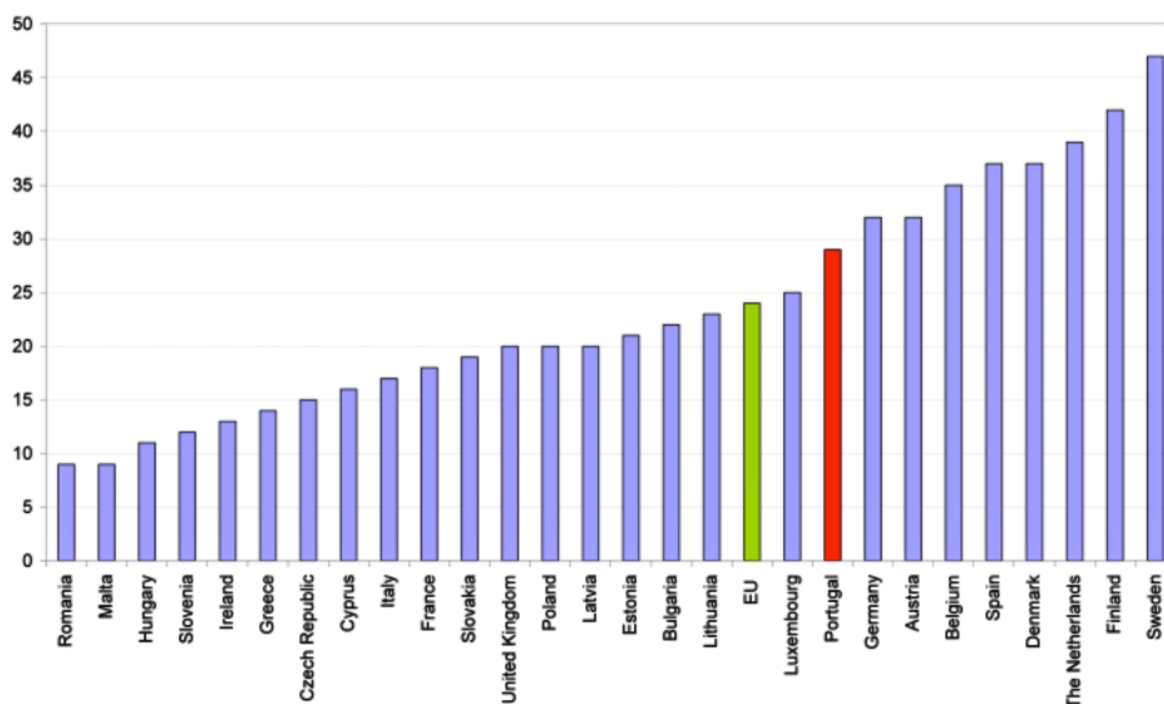


Figure 4.3: Women's representation in national parliaments in the European Union (EU), 2008

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=774&langId=en&intPageId=656> (accessed 19/4/2010; note: choose data in excel format, 2008_Q1).

Compared to the other countries in the European Union (EU), Portugal occupied an above-average position, which was then 24%. The most egalitarian parliaments of the EU were unsurprisingly the Northern ones, while the least egalitarian ones could be found mainly in the East and South. This relatively high percentage of women in the Portuguese parliament can be considered the result of a strategy of some political parties, namely the Socialist Party (PS) and the Left Block (BE), which had been pushing for the passage of a women's quota law (Baum and Espírito-Santo, forthcoming). A 'Parity Law'⁴⁰ was eventually approved in August 2006. According to that law, all lists presented for local, legislative, and European elections must guarantee a minimum representation of 33% for each sex. The parties who do not respect this minimum will be fined.

Although in 2008 (figure 5.3) the law had not yet been applied (it was enacted for the 2009 elections⁴¹), its effects were already visible. Several authors agree that the introduction of PS first draft legislation in 1999 in favour of positive discrimination mechanisms for women have contributed enormously to increasing the public exposure of this topic in

⁴⁰ Organic Law n° 3/2006, 21st August.

⁴¹ Apart from the interpolated local elections to the Council of Lisbon, that took place in July 15th 2007.

Portugal, despite the fact it has been rejected (Jiménez, 2002: 293; Martins and Teixeira, 2005: 83; Viegas and Faria, 2001: 51). In fact, since the mid 1990s, all political parties have seen increased female representation in their parliamentary groups (Espírito-Santo, 2006). Furthermore, after the 2005 legislative elections, the PS enjoyed its first single-party government, which corresponded to 121 MPs (out of 230). Since 1988, the PS had an internal quota system of 25% (updated to 33% in 2003), which has been fully implemented since 1999. Therefore the election of so many socialists contributed to increase the female representation in parliament.

From the underrepresented groups mentioned in the questionnaire (women, ethnical minorities, young and old people, and physically disable people), *women* is the group that the Portuguese would most like to see increasing (75% of the sample), and also the group that the least amount of people would like to see decreasing (1%). The second favourite group with a slightly lower percentage of preferences is *young people* (almost 70%). All the other groups were mentioned positively by less than half of the sample. Furthermore, there is a significant difference among men and women regarding the presence of female MPs, with women feeling significantly more than men that women should have stronger representation in the NP (see note at the bottom of the table 4.1). Looking at the percentages by gender (see table 4.1), we observe that the biggest difference can be observed concerning ‘many more women’. While around 50% of both genders agree there should be ‘a few more’ women in parliament, many more female than male citizens think there should be ‘many more’ women (30% vs. 17%).

Table 4.1: Opinion on whether the Portuguese Parliament should have more or less underrepresented groups (% / row data)

	Fewer	The same quantity	A few more	Many more
Black or ethnical minorities	89 8.73	530 52.01	284 27.87	116 11.38
Women	Total			
	15	274	595	287
	1.28	23.40	50.81	24.51
	Women			
	4	129	332	199
	0.60	19.43	50.00	29.97
	Men			
	11	145	263	88
	2.17	28.60	51.87	17.36
Young	30	323	555	263
	2.56	27.58	47.40	22.46
Ancient	306	556	209	69
	26.84	48.77	18.33	6.05
Physically unable	92	488	429	84
	8.42	44.65	39.25	7.69

Note: Chi-square for whether the Portuguese Parliament should have more female MPs is significantly different among men and women; Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 34.7073$, $Pr = 0.000$, $n = 1171$.

To summarize, the majority of the Portuguese – and women in particular – are willing to see the presence of women in parliament increasing and almost nobody wants to see it decreasing. I will now focus on what some of the reasons for that position may be.

Data and method

The dataset used in this chapter consists of the result of the application of a questionnaire to a representative sample of the Portuguese population in 2008 (Freire and Viegas, 2009). In total 1350 adults were interviewed. This survey is part of a project called ‘The Portuguese MPs in Comparative Perspective’ (2007-2011), which is coordinated by André Freire and José Leite Viegas and aims to provide an updated and enriched picture of the characteristics of the Portuguese MPs (1975-2005), and to improve the comprehension of citizen attitudes vis-à-vis political representatives and political institutions.

For each one of the reasons identified in figure 4.2, a correspondent variable in the dataset was chosen. For the reason *positive evaluation of women as political leaders*, the question used is ‘What is your level of agreement with the following sentence: On the whole

men make better political leaders than women do’? The second reason *perceived quality of democracy* is measured by the level of agreement with the sentence ‘The fact that 80% of MPs are men is a serious threat to democracy’. The third reason *feeling that interests are better represented* corresponds to the degree of agreement or disagreement with the sentence ‘Men can sufficiently represent the interests of women in politics’. Finally, the level of agreement with a *group-confined representation based on gender* is measured through the answer to the question ‘In your opinion, an MP represents above all: Women, in the case of a female MP and Men in the case of male MPs’. These are the main independent variables of this research. The answering categories of the four variables range from ‘totally disagree’ to ‘totally agree’ and its number is either four or five (see table 4.2 for details).

In the next sections, after some descriptive statistics that provide a first glance of the data, the results of some logistic regressions are presented and discussed.

Descriptive analysis

Before exploring the relationship between the dependent variable (*being in favour of more female MPs*) and the main independent variables, let us see how the Portuguese society features regarding the latter (see table 4.2).

At a first glance it seems that the Portuguese are overall positive in evaluating women as political leaders. In fact, 67% of the total sample disagree with the sentence ‘On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do’, while only 34% agree. However, a closer look reveals a very pronounced gender gap. The percentage of disagreement with the sentence is significantly (see the first note under table 4.2) higher among women (77% *vs.* 53%). Still, half of male citizens do not think that men make better political leaders than women.

Regarding whether the absence of women in politics is serious for democracy, the Portuguese population is perfectly divided in the middle; while half agrees that it is, the other half disagrees. Also in this case, female citizens share significantly more pro-women positions than their male peers (see note 2 at the bottom of the table 4.2), even if the gender difference is less observable than in the previous case.

Table 4.2: Opinion on several issues regarding the presence of women in politics
(% / row data)

		Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
1. On the whole men make better political leaders than women do	Total	792 66.50		399 33.50
	Women	517 76.93		155 23.07
	Men	275 52.99		244 47.01
2. The fact that 80% of MPs are men is a serious threat to democracy	Total	575 50.62		561 49.38
	Women	275 43.72		354 56.28
	Men	300 59.17		207 40.83
3. Men can sufficiently represent the interests of women in politics	Total	317 25.65	403 32.61	516 41.75
	Women	217 31.36	223 32.23	252 36.42
	Men	100 18.38	180 33.09	264 48.53
4. An MP represents above all: Women, in the case of a female MP and Men in the case of male MP	Total	485 38.4	518 41.01	260 20.59
	Women	282 39.49	299 41.88	133 18.63
	Men	203 36.97	219 39.89	127 23.13

Note: 1. Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 75.3857$ Pr = 0.000, n= 1191
2. Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 26.8128$ Pr = 0.000, n= 1136
3. Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 30.7696$ Pr = 0.000, n= 1236
4. Pearson $\chi^2(2) = 3.8720$ Pr = 0.144, n= 1263

The respondents were also asked whether they believe that men can sufficiently represent the interests of women in politics (see table 4.2). Around 40% of the Portuguese agree with the sentence and that is the position that the highest percentage of people hold. A considerable percentage of respondents (33%) have no opinion on the sentence while 26% are against it. Also here there is a clear gender gap, with women disagreeing with the sentence significantly more than men (see note 3 under table 4.2).

Finally, we observe that the Portuguese population is pretty much against a gender division of the MPs role. Only 20% of the citizens think that male MPs should represent

mainly men, while female MPs should represent mainly women. Furthermore, this opinion is shared equally by men and women (see note 4 on the bottom of the table 4.2)⁴².

We conclude that in general a thin majority of the Portuguese society is favourable to three of the four analysed reasons for wanting more women in politics and that women have a more positive opinion about female politicians than men. In the next section, we will try to see how these independent variables relate to the wish for more women in Parliament.

Main analysis

The model

As stated before, the dependent variable is *being in favour of more female MPs* (see table 4.1 for details)⁴³. This variable is nominal, originally with four answering categories, which range from 1 (fewer female MPs) to 4 (many more). Since there were only 15 cases in the first category, it was lumped together with the second one. So the version of the variable included in the analysis is composed of only three categories. Since it is an ordinal variable, Ordered Logistic Regressions (OLR) are performed. It is important to clarify that the questions that correspond to the dependent and independent variables of this chapter were not linked in the questionnaire. However, I argue that in terms of their content they are obviously connected and that the independent variables offer a very plausible explanation for the dependent one.

Three models were run. Model 1 consists of some socio-economic and political attitudes variables which allow a deeper understanding of who the people who want to see more women in NP are. These variables are also supposed to work as controls when the *reasons* are added in model 2. The socio-economic variables included are: *female* (dummy), *education* (ordinal, 8 categories), *age* (discrete). The political attitudes variables are: *interest in politics* (ordinal, 4 categories) and *self-position on a left-right scale* (11 categories, 0=left; 10=right).

⁴² In the questionnaire, the same question ('In your opinion, an MP mainly represents...') was also used regarding other issues, such as 'her/his district/region', 'her/his voters', 'the entire population', 'her/his political party', and 'specific social groups'. The option that reaches the highest agreement is the political party. Almost 70% of the people interviewed think that MPs mainly represent her/his political party. Half of the sample considers that the MPs represent mainly their voters, while the entire population was only mentioned by 43%.

⁴³ The precise wording of the question is: 'Do you feel that your parliament should have fewer, the same quantity, a few more or many more women parliamentarians?'

Model 2 adds up the main independent variables, and therefore allows testing the four possible *reasons* for wanting more female MPs:

- *positive evaluation of women as political leaders* (categorical, 4 categories: 1=totally disagree to 4=totally agree)
- *perceived quality of democracy* (categorical, 4 categories: 1=totally disagree to 4=totally agree)
- *feeling that interests are better represented* (categorical, 5 categories: 1=totally disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree 5=totally agree)
- *Group-confined representation based on gender* (categorical, 5 categories: 1=totally disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree 5=totally agree)

Although only one of the reasons is expected to behave significantly different between women and men, namely the third one (*feeling that interests are better represented*), model 3 includes interactions between each one of the main variables and gender.

Results

The first three columns of table 4.3 present the results of Ordered Logistic Regressions (OLR), following the three models previously described. The coefficients that we get in any kind of logistic regression, including these ones, have little substantive meaning for most people (Long and Freese, 2006: 177)⁴⁴. This happens because these are nonlinear models, and therefore the effect of the independent variables on the dependent one is not the same for all values of the independent variables. Later on, predicted probabilities are shown. However, the signs of the coefficients as well as their level of significance may be interpreted in the same way as in Ordinal Least Square regression (OLS).

Regarding the first model, which includes some socio-economic variables and two basic variables measuring political attitudes (level of interest in politics and self-positioning in a left-right scale), we see that holding all other variables constant, only the respondent's sex and age have a significant impact on the wish to have more women in NP. Being a woman increases the probability of wanting a bigger female presence, as does being younger.

Concerning model 2, which tests the four *reasons* under analysis in this chapter (see figure 4.2), we observe that three of them seem to be somehow connected with the dependent variable. Agreeing that 'men make better political leaders than women do', and believing that

⁴⁴ 'We can interpret the coefficients as indicating that for a unit change in X_k , we expect the logit to change by B_k , holding all other variables constant' (Long and Freese, 2006: 177).

‘male MPs represent women well enough’ increases the probability of being satisfied with the actual number of women in NP (instead of wanting it to increase). On the contrary, those who agree that the ‘reduced presence of women in politics is bad for democracy’ tend to be in favour of more women in NP. There seems to be no connection between agreeing with a group-confined representation based on gender and wishing to have more or less women in NP. So instead of four arguments justifying why people may be in favour of having more women in NP, we only confirm the importance of three.

In model 3 the interactions between the four arguments and gender were added. The argument that male MPs do not represent women well enough is significantly connected to the desire to have a larger female presence in the NP, but just in the case of women respondents. Furthermore, this result is no longer significant in the case of male citizens (which is now given by the coefficient of third argument alone). In other words, this argument applies only to women, which confirms our predictions (see figure 4.2)⁴⁵. Also as expected, none of the remaining interaction terms are significant suggesting that there are no significant differences between the genders at that level. Still in model 3, the female dummy loses significance, implying that the gender gap shown in model 2 is an artifact of failing to distinguish effects for men from effects for women for the variable ‘male MPs represent women well enough’.

It is now indispensable to read the results in a more substantive way, i.e. through predicted probabilities. The challenge of that is ‘to summarize the effects of the independent variables to fully reflect key substantive processes without overwhelming and distracting detail’ (Long and Freese, 2006: 184). The challenge is particularly high in the case of ordinal regressions because the number of predicted probabilities that could be presented is very high. In order to do a meaningful selection, a binary logistic regression was performed (model 4), having as the dependent variable a dummy variable in which the 1 corresponds to *many more women* and 0 to all *other options* (i.e. fewer, the same and a few more). The option to isolate the category *many more female MPs* makes sense since that is the category that clearly stands out from the mainstream position (see table 4.1), which wants to keep the status quo (or want just a *few more* women).

⁴⁵ Regarding the fit of the three models, it seems the second generally presents the best results. It has the lowest AIC and BIC and also a non-significant Likelihood Ratio test (LR test) between model 2 and 3⁴⁵ demonstrated that we have no reason to reject the hypothesis that the coefficients of the variables included in model 3 (but not 2) are equal to zero. However, since the McKelvey & Zavoina's R2 of model 3 is the highest of the three models, and – most importantly – since judging from the theoretical framework it is to be expected that at least one argument applies particularly to women, I decided to accept the third model as the final model.

What distinguishes those who want *many more* women in NP from all the others (model 4) is their opinion regarding how serious the lack of women in political power is for democracy, and the feeling that male MPs represent women well enough. While the first argument applies to both women and men, the latter applies only to women. Furthermore, there is a significant gender gap in this model with women having a higher probability of desiring *many more* female MPs, contrary to what we saw in model 3. Holding all variables included in the model constant in their mean within each gender, being a women is associated with a predicted probability of choosing ‘many more female MPs’ of 27,7%, while the respective value for men is 15,5%⁴⁶. This appears to be an artifact of lumping the answer categories ‘fewer or the same’ with ‘more’ women and demonstrates that my model does not explain the whole difference that exists between women and men regarding their choice of the category ‘many more’ female MPs (which is not a problem since that was anyway not the goal of the chapter). More substantive results are presented in the next section (see figure 4.4).

⁴⁶ These values were calculated through Clarify (Tomz, Wittenberg et al., 2003). The 95% confidence interval for the women’s value is 23,0% and 33,1%; while for men it is 11,5% and 19,7%.

Table 4.3: Explaining the reasons for being in favour or against more women in NP, using four versions of the dependent variable

	OLR (model1)	OLR (model2)	OLR (model3)	Logit (model4)
Dependent variable	1=fewer or the same 2=more 3=many more	1=fewer or the same 2=more 3=many more	1=fewer or the same 2=more 3=many more	1=many more 0=otherwise
Female	.615*** (.131)	.323* (.151)	1.430 (.887)	3.694** (1.189)
Age (years)	-.010* (.004)	-.009* (.005)	-.009* (.005)	-.010 (.006)
Education (8 categories)	-.047 (.044)	-.093 ⁴⁷ (.050)	-.076 (.051)	-.118 ⁴⁸ (.065)
Interest in politics (4 categories)	.077 (.081)	.058 (.092)	.057 (.092)	.125 (.118)
Left-right scale (0=left to 10=right)	-.011 (.031)	.012 (.036)	.016 (.036)	.009 (.047)
1. Men better political leaders than women (1=totally disagree to 4=totally agree)		-.256* (.107)	-.286 ⁴⁹ (.155)	.147 (.225)
2. No female MPs is a threat to democracy (1=totally disagree to 4=totally agree)		.651*** (.109)	.643*** (.159)	.846*** (.215)
3. Male MPs represent women well enough (1=totally disagree to 5=totally agree)		-.239** (.081)	.010 (.123)	.249 (.175)
4. Male MPs represent men; Female MPs women (1=totally disagree to 5=totally agree)		.017 (.078)	-.005 (.115)	-.174 (.160)
Female*var1			.077 (.213)	-.350 (.283)
Female*var2			-.008 (.210)	-.297 (.267)
Female*var3			-.444** (.166)	-.687** (.217)
Female*var4			.060 (.156)	.221 (.201)
Cut1	-1.440 (.413)	-1.425 (.647)	-670 (.816)	
Cut2	.937 (.411)	1.154 (.647)	1.927 (.820)	
Constant				-3.833** (1.161)
Pseudo R2	0.0158	0.0580	0.0629	0.0914
Number of obs	905	751	751	751
Log likelihood	-911.82507	-720.92836	-717.20702	-378.88134
McKelvey & Zavoina's R2 ⁵⁰	0.035	0.128	0.137	0.156
AIC	1837.650	1463.857	1464.414	785.763
BIC	1871.306	1514.692	1533.735	850.462

Standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Note: McKelvey & Zavoina's R2 makes sense for models that can be defined in terms of a latent variable, such as ordered logistic regression and binary regressions (Long and Freese, 2006: 110). And '(...)' for ordinal outcomes, McKelvey & Zavoina's R2 most closely approximates the R2 obtained by fitting the linear regression model on the underlying latent variable' (Long and Freese, 2006: 196).

⁴⁷ P-value=0.062

⁴⁸ P-value=0.068

⁴⁹ P-value=0.065

⁵⁰ Contrary to all other measures, the McKelvey & Zavoina's R2, AIC and BIC do not come directly in the output of the logistic regression. They were obtained through the STATA command 'fitstat', which was done after the regression. The command 'fitstat' is part of a package SPost (authored by Authors: J. Scott Long and Jeremy Freese) that can be added to STATA. Several version of AIC and BIC are given by the command 'fitstat'. In both cases the version "used by STATA" was chosen in order to keep harmony between the chapters.

Predicted probabilities

The figure below shows the probability of choosing the category *many more* female MPs according to the positions towards the four *reasons* here analysed, by gender.

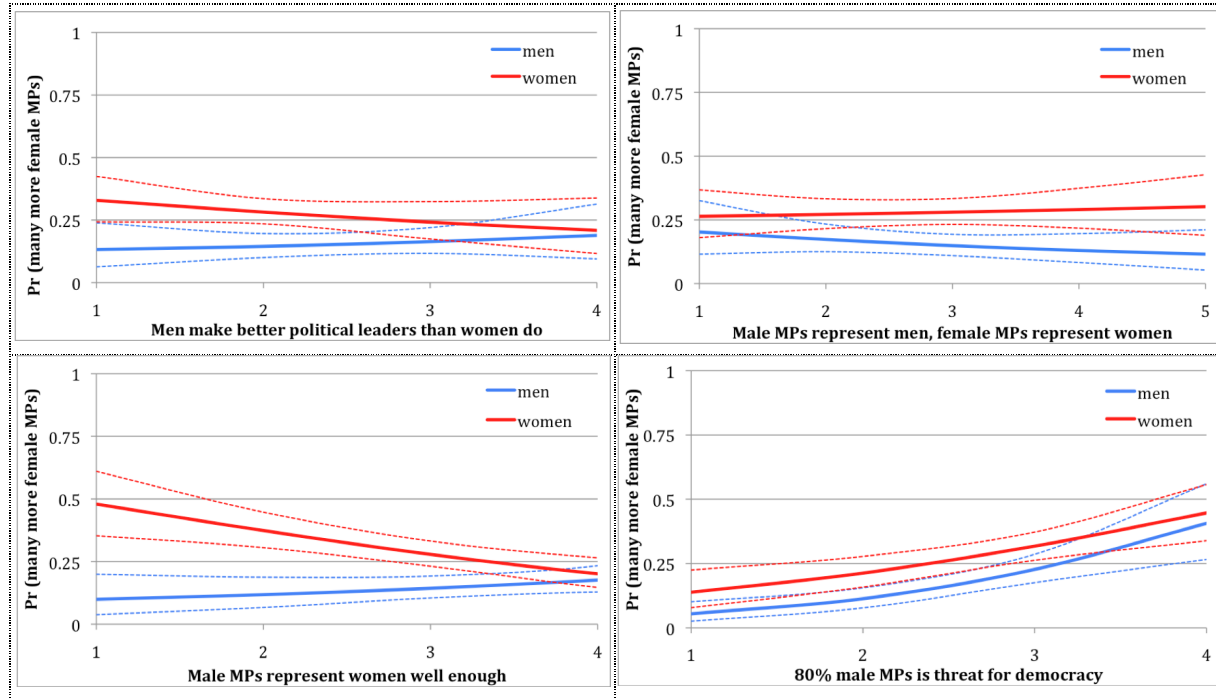


Figure 4.4: Predicted probability of choosing *many more* female MPs, by gender regarding the four reasons

Note 1: The scale of the X axis is 1 (totally disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree) and 4 (totally agree) when the scale is from 1 to 4, and 1 (totally disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree) 4 (agree) and 5 (totally agree), when the scale is from 1 to 5.

Note 2: These values were calculated using Clarify (Tomz, Wittenberg et al., 2003). All other independent variables included in the equation were set to their mean within each gender. Dashed lines indicate the 95% confidence interval.

Looking at the flat lines of the first graph of figure 4.4, we confirm that the evaluation of men and women as political leaders plays practically no role in explaining the option for ‘many more female MPs’. This is mainly true in the case of men, since women who ‘totally disagree’ or ‘disagree’ with the sentence ‘men make better political leaders than women do’ have a predicted probability of wanting ‘many more female MPs’ significantly superior to men’s – though the substantive difference is slight. On the contrary, men and women who ‘agree’ or ‘totally agree’ with the sentence (holding at their means within each gender all other variables included in the model) do not distinguish themselves concerning the same option. Regarding the group-confined representation based on gender (‘male MPs represent men, female MPs represent women’), the equally flat lines reveal similar results to the previous *reason*, with the differentiation that the predicted probabilities for choosing ‘many

more female MPs' for men and women are never significantly different from each other (regardless of the opinion on whether male MPs represent men and female MPs represent women). This result suggests that those (women and men) who want *many more female MPs* do not seem to be motivated by expectation of whom they will represent.

On the contrary, the two remaining *reasons* do seem to play a role although in very different ways (two graphs in the second row, figure 4.4). In the graph on left side, we observe that the probability of women choosing *many more female MPs* increases significantly as they move towards disagreeing that male MPs represent women's interests well enough. Keeping all other variables constant at their means, we observe that those women who 'totally disagree' that 'male MPs represent women's interests well enough' have a probability of 47,9% of wanting *many more female MPs*, while those who 'totally agree' with the sentence have a probability of 14,3% of choosing the same category. Women's and men's positions are similar only among those who 'totally agree' that male MPs represent women's interests well enough. In that category, both women and men present very low probability of wanting *many more female MPs*. Yet, concerning all other answering categories (namely 'totally disagree', 'disagree', 'agree') of the variable 'male MPs represent women's interests well enough' the differences between women and men are statistically significant – as illustrated by the non-overlapping confidence intervals at the left of the graph. Concerning men, whether or not male MPs represent women well enough does not relate at all to their wish for more or fewer female MPs (as the male's flat line shows).

On the other hand, both women and men seem to increase their probability of choosing *many more female MPs* the more they agree that the lack of women in NP is a threat to democracy (figure 4.4), illustrating the significant coefficient for the main effect of table 4.3 (and the non-significant effect for the interaction). Among those who *totally agree* that 'the fact that 80% of MPs are men is a serious threat to democracy', the probability of wanting *many more* women parliamentarians is 44,6% for women and 40,1% for men, while among those who totally disagree with the sentence those values are 13,8% and 5.5% respectively. Although the percentage of both men and women who totally agree with that sentence represents a minority of Portuguese society (respectively 6% and 11%), the relationship between agreeing with that sentence and wishing for *many more* female MPs is very strong – see figure 4.4).

Conclusions

As stated before, the aim of this chapter is to understand the reasons *why* some citizens are willing to see more women in political power. There are two considerable differences regarding the four *reasons* at focus in this chapter between those who prefer to keep the status quo regarding female representation in NP (or want just a *few more* women) and those who want *many more* female MPs. The first difference is that the latter believe significantly more than the former that ‘the fact that 80% of MPs are men is a serious threat to democracy’. This is the only *reason* that motivates men to wish for *many more female MPs* (see figure 5.4). The second difference is that women who want many more female MPs are more likely to find the presence of women in politics indispensable to guarantee that women’s interests are represented. Although 18% of Portuguese men tend to agree that male MPs cannot sufficiently represent women’s interests (see table 4.2), we observe no higher probability of wanting *many more* female MPs among this group (see figure 4.4).

The two remaining arguments here analysed do not seem to play a role in explaining preference for more or the same quantity of female MPs. Neither women nor men who want *many more* female MPs seem to be motivated by how they evaluate women and men as political leaders. Furthermore, neither women expect female MPs to particularly represent them, nor men expect male MPs to particularly represent them, and therefore group-confined representation based on gender is also no motivation for wanting more female MPs.

Attempting to translate these results into *how* female politicians are likely to influence citizens’ political attitudes we may say that: we should not expect women (or men) to feel automatically more represented when there are more women in politics, since there is no relationship between wanting many more female MPs and believing in group-confined representation based on gender. However, some women do think that women are indispensable to making sure that female citizens are well represented, and those are expected to feel more represented when there are more women in political power. In other words, the presence of female politicians is likely to increase the feeling of substantive representation among some women.

The results also suggest that a significant number of both women and men perceive democracy to have more quality when female presence is higher. It would be interesting in future studies to explore more deeply what exactly this means. One possibility could be that due to the gender stereotypes and the novelty effect that we mentioned before, citizens would consider women to have some better qualities as politicians than men, and therefore a democracy in which they are highly represented will work better. However, since we saw that

the evaluation of men and women as politicians does not seem to play a role in the desire for *many more* female MPs, we do not expect that possibility to be correct. More plausible is the possibility that citizens perceive a democracy with a high female representation as more fair, open and accessible.

The fact that the data is collected only in Portugal naturally limits the scope of this chapter. Nevertheless, since in 2008 Portugal had a percentage of female representation in the NP superior to the EU average and the fact that it followed the international trend of the adoption of gender quotas are grounds to believe that the main conclusions could turn out to be similar in other European countries; however research is necessary to confirm it.

5 – Gender composition of political environment and the evaluation of democracy: across nations and longitudinal analyses

Introduction

‘Most scholars agree that the survival of democracy rests on a broad and deep foundation of support among citizenry. Democracies lacking such a foundation of democracy are at risk’ (Klingemann, 1995: 32). It is therefore important to analyse citizens’ evaluation of their political regime, and also the main factors leading to that evaluation. Following Easton’s distinction between support for the community, the regime and the authorities (1975), this chapter focuses on support for the political regime. It aims to study a particular part of the regime support, namely the ‘regime performance’, which is one of the five concepts that constitute the framework of Pippa Norris’ edited book on that topic (1995: 10).

Pippa Norris identifies three schools of thoughts seeking to explain regime support: the role of social and political values that are deep-rooted in each society, government performance (economy, leaders’ evaluations, etc) and political institutions (electoral system, party system, etc) (Norris (ed.), 1995: 217-221). This chapter focuses on a much less common factor in the literature, namely the sex of the most important politicians in a certain country. More precisely, it aims to illuminate the relationship between the presence of women in political power and citizens’ satisfaction with the democratic process.

This chapter builds upon the conclusions reached by Karp and Banducci (2008), who analysed the impact of the presence of women in National Parliaments across 35 countries, using data from the *Comparative Study of Electoral Systems* (CSES). The authors found that ‘citizens (women and men) in countries with greater female representation are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works and more likely to believe that elections reflect the views of voters’ (Karp and Banducci, 2008: 112). Karp and Banducci were surprised to have found an impact on both women and men, instead of on women only and did not explain why that might be the case. According to the results from chapter 4, at least in the case of Portugal, one of the main reasons associated with both women’s and men’s wish to have more female MPs is their belief in the fact that 80% of the MPs are men is a serious threat to democracy. This is actually the only argument linked with men’s wish to have many more female MPs in office – which is an idea that I had anticipated in my theoretical expectations (chapter 3). There is no reason why the presence of female politicians should not affect male citizens as well, since two of the four mechanisms that potentially operate behind the

supposed impact – namely gender stereotypes and the novelty effect – are likely to affect men and women similarly. However, since the other two mechanisms – the link between descriptive and symbolic representation and self-interest (see figure 3.1) – ought to apply to women only, the possibility that women's satisfaction with democracy is more strongly affected by the presence of female politicians than men's should not be excluded.

The objective of this chapter is therefore to confirm the result reached by Karp and Banducci, i.e. that in countries where there are more women in parliament, citizens (both women and men) are more satisfied with the way democracy works. I aim to do this by applying a more demanding model than do Karp and Banducci, i.e. with many more mainly macro level controls and doing two different kinds of analysis: a cross sectional one, and a longitudinal one. I also aim to have more branches of political power. As stated in the Introduction (chapter 1), most studies focus on the legislature, female MPs only. I believe that since we cannot isolate the impact that the gender composition of each political layer has on citizens, the omission of one or more layers might create biased results. Furthermore, it is logical to imagine that each layer of political power produces different kinds of impacts. Having the four most important levels of the legislative and executive branches at the national level (parliament, government, presidency and prime minister) in the same model allows testing which of two characteristics of the political positions is the most relevant: the importance of the political position or the collective representation (vs. the dyadic one). If the former is the most important, then we would expect to observe the strongest results associated with the presence of a female President or Prime Minister. On the contrary, if collective representation is more likely to produce an impact than the presence of a sole woman, then the percentage of women in parliament and government should have the greater effect. Why should that be the case? There are at least three possible reasons: the presence of a sole woman depends on the personal characteristics of that particular woman, while in a group of women the personal characteristics of each one are less important. Presidents and Prime Ministers are very often perceived as being people who are above average, which might increase the distance between the citizens and him/her. The image of a parliament where approximately half the members are women might give the impression of a gender equilibrated environment, while only a female leader (even if powerful) surrounded by men might not be so efficient in presenting that image.

Regarding data, this chapter relies on the three modules of the dataset: The *Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)*. The main module for the purpose of this chapter (and also of chapter 6) is module 2 used by Karp and Banducci. Accordingly it is

used in the main analysis of this chapter, the cross sectional one. For the longitudinal analysis, CSES module 1, 2 and 3 are used, allowing a reasonable number of countries to be analysed over time.

Support for regime performance is measured through the variable *satisfaction with the way democracy works in own country*. It consists of a four point scale (1=not at all satisfied to 4=very satisfied)⁵¹. Even if some authors argue that this variable should not be used as it taps multiple dimensions of political support and the mix of those dimensions varies across both individuals and nations (Canache, Mondak et al., 2001), others seem to rely on it, perhaps because it is usually the only available measure of this kind in surveys. Also in the case of the CSES dataset it is the only variable of its kind available.

The chapter is structured in the following way: first, the CSES dataset module 2 is described. The subsequent sections are dedicated to the analysis, which is split in two parts, a cross sectional analysis followed by a longitudinal analysis. Finally, I summarise the results and draw some conclusions.

CSES data used in this dissertation

It is necessary to describe in some detail the dataset CSES module 2, which is used not only in this chapter but also in chapter 6 of this thesis. Although in both chapters, the CSES was the main dataset employed, many other sources were used to build macro variables (at the country level) that were then added to the CSES dataset. Whenever other sources were utilised it is clearly indicated.

The CSES module 2 consists of individual data on political and demographic issues, deposited along with district and macro variables on 41 countries around the world. All surveys were administered between 2001 and 2006, most of them after elections took place. In both chapters of this thesis that employ CSES data, the aim is to utilise the same 35 countries that were used by Karp and Banducci (2008) in order to do as much as possible a reliable replication of their study. For different reasons, the number of countries included in the models is always slightly lower. Karp and Banducci (2008) excluded the following six countries from their analysis – Germany (telephone), Hong Kong (2004), Kyrgyzstan (2005), Portugal (2005), Russia (2004), Taiwan (2004). Germany, Portugal and Taiwan deposited two datasets each with the CSES. I have chosen to use Germany (personal interview, instead of

⁵¹ The original question is ‘On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country]?’

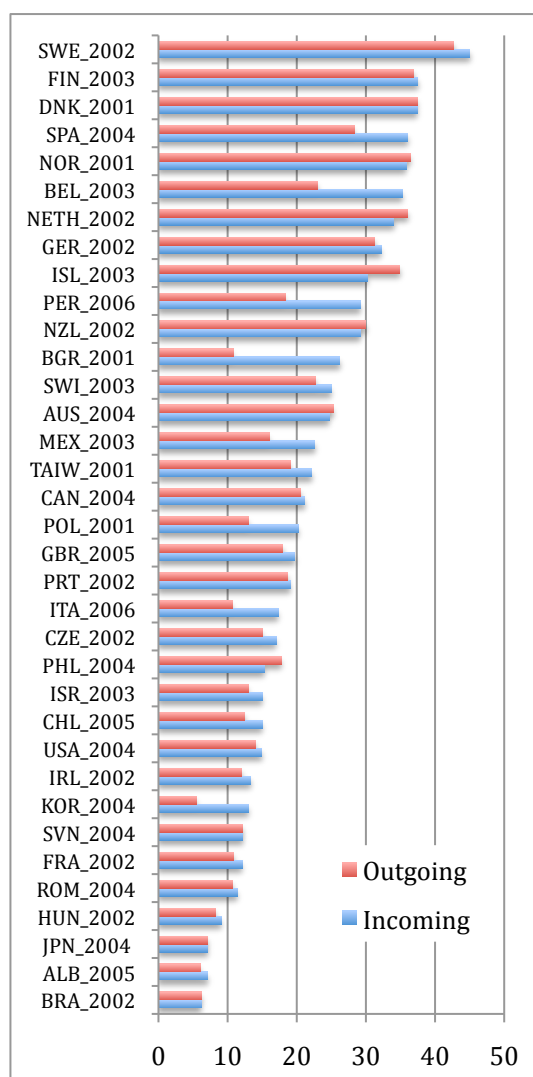
telephone), Portugal (2002) and Taiwan (2001). Election studies from Russia (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005) are not included in their analysis because they were presidential rather than parliamentary elections. The authors do not explain the reason why they have excluded Hong Kong (2004). The table A.1 in the Annexes shows a general overview of these countries.

The 35 countries have a great diversity in geographical terms, although the European continent is overrepresented (22 countries) and Africa is totally absent. Six countries are situated in the American continents, five in Asia and two in the Oceania. 14 are new democracies vs. 21 which are old democracies. Concerning political regimes, the majority of the countries are parliamentary (18), followed by semi-presidential (8), presidential (7), Israel is prime ministerial and Switzerland assembly-independent (see table A.1 for details).

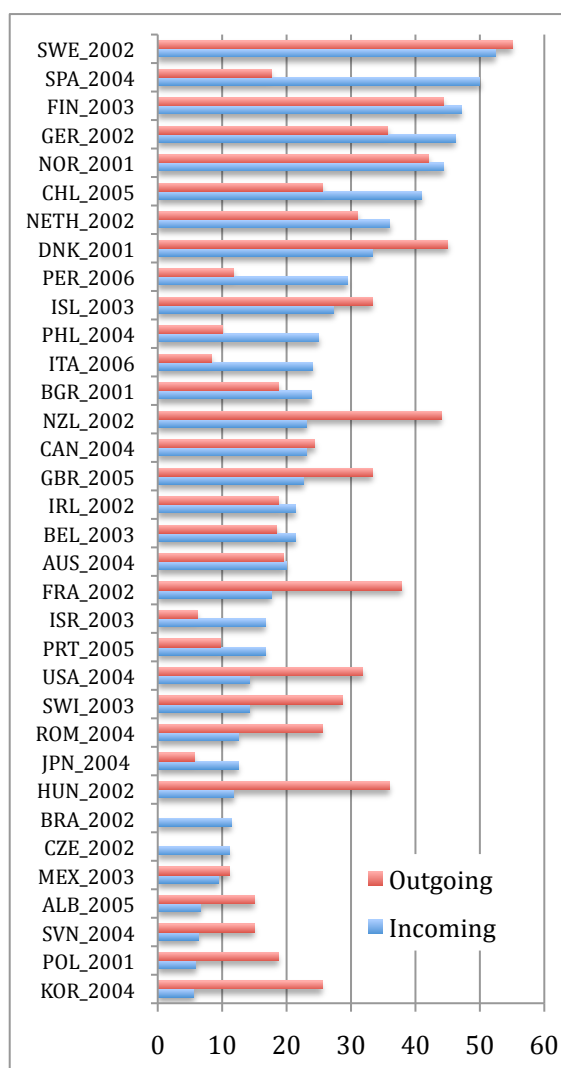
Figure 5.1 presents the percentage of women in parliament and in ministerial positions both in the outgoing legislature (before the elections studied by the CSES) and in the incoming legislature (as a result of the elections studied by the CSES) for the 35 countries that are object of analysis in this thesis. There is a large variety in terms of the gender composition of their political environment. According to the Quota Project (IDEA), seven of these countries had approved some type of quota law at the time of the CSES survey, namely Belgium, Brazil, France, Korea, Mexico, Peru, and the Philippines⁵². However, these are not necessarily the countries that have the highest percentage of women in parliament, although Belgium, Peru and Mexico have quite considerable female representation.

While around half of the 35 countries have up to 20% female representation in parliament, the other half have a representation of 20% or more. Figure 5.1 confirms that there is a general tendency for the feminisation of national parliaments to increase, as in all analysed countries – with the exception of Iceland, Australia and the Philippines – the incoming legislature has a higher percentage of women than the outgoing one. Regarding ministerial positions, the differences between incoming and outgoing are very often more impressive, but there is no clear tendency, with some countries increasing the numbers of female ministers and others decreasing it.

⁵² Source: <http://www.quotaproject.org/> (accessed 3/8/2011). Karp and Banducci (2008: 108) mentioned also Taiwan as having quotas, but I cannot confirm it since IDEA does not have data on Taiwan.



Percentage of female MPs



Percentage of female ministerial positions

Figure 5.1: Percentage of female MPs and female ministerial positions (incoming and outgoing legislatures)

Source percentage female MPs outgoing⁵³ and incoming⁵⁴: IPU <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm> (accessed 15/11/2009). The only exception is Taiwan, outgoing: <http://210.69.23.140/pdf/B1998004.pdf>; incoming: <http://210.69.23.140/pdf/B2001004.pdf>⁵⁵.

Source of percentage female in ministerial positions: <http://www.ipu.org/english/surveys.htm#MAP2005> (accessed 11/7/2010)⁵⁶ and <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/WorldStats/Gender-proportion-women-positions.html> (accessed 11/7/2011)⁵⁷.

⁵³ In order to get the outgoing percentages, I did an average between the percentage of female MPs observed immediately after the elections that preceded the CSES ones and the percentage observed immediately before the CSES elections.

⁵⁴ For all countries I chose the values observed in December of the election year, to make totally sure that I have the percentage of female MP after the CSES election.

⁵⁵ I thank Po-kuan Wu for helping me to find those values.

⁵⁶ Most values were taken from this website since it was the first one that I found out; it has data for 2000, 2005 and 2010. For incoming government I haven chosen the closest year after the CSES election took place, and for outgoing government the closest data available before CSES election. In the 2000 map, Czech Republic was not available so the Czech value was given to me by Angela Movineau (to whom I thank the help).

In general, the countries that have the highest percentage of female MPs also have the highest number of women in ministerial positions (figure 5.1). There are, however, many exceptions to this rule. Chile is the most evident exception as it has a relatively low level of female MPs (15%) and a high level of women in cabinet (41%) within the incoming government. Belgium is an example of an exception in the opposite direction. With 35% female MPs, Belgium places itself among the most gender balanced incoming parliaments of figure 5.1 but has a relatively low (21%) percentage of women in cabinet.

Table 5.1: Current⁵⁸ and past female PM and Presidents in the 35 analysed countries

	Female Prime Minister	Female President
Bulgaria (2001)	1994-1995 (Reneta Indzhova)	
Canada (2004)	1993 (Kim Campbell)	
Chile (2005_2006)		2006-present (Michelle Bachelet)
Finland (2003)	2003 (Anneli Tuulikki Jäätteenmäki)	2000-present (Tarja Halonen)
France (2002)	1991-1992 (Edith Cresson)	
Great Britain (2005)	1979-1990 (Margaret Thatcher)	
Iceland (2003)		1980-1996 (Vigdís Finnbogadóttir)
Ireland (2002)		1990-1997 (Mary Robinson)
		1997- present (Mary McAleese)
Israel (2003)	1969-1974 (Golda Meir)	
New Zealand (2002)	1997-1999 (Jenny Shipley)	
	1999-2008 (Helen Clark)	
Peru (2006)	2003 (Beatriz Merino)	
		1986-1992 (Corazon Aquino)
Philippines (2004)		2001-2010 (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo)
Poland (2001)	1992-1993 (Hanna Suchocka)	
Norway (2001)	1981; 1986-1989; 1990- 1996 (Gro Harlem Brundtland)	
Switzerland (2003)		1998-1999 (Ruth Dreifuss)
		2006-2007 (Micheline Calmy-Rey)

Source: Table 1 (Adler, 1997: 179-180), list of members of the Council of Women World Leaders (Webpage: <http://www.cwwl.org>, accessed 8/5/2008) and <http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith/00women.htm> (accessed 9/8/2011).

Note: Current PM and Presidents are underlined in grey.

⁵⁷ This website was mainly used to collect data on previous years (not available in the posters of the other website).

⁵⁸ 'Current' here means in the year of the election covered by the CSES dataset. In the first column, close to the country name, the respective year is indicated.

Regarding female PM and Presidents (table 5.1), 15 countries from my sample had a female political leader, of which 10 were Prime Ministers and 6 were Presidents. At the time the CSES questionnaire was fielded three women had been President of their respective countries for some years, namely Tarja Halonen in Finland (since 2000), Mary McAleese in Ireland (since 1997), and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in the Philippines (since 2001) – see table 5.1. Furthermore, Helen Clark had been the Prime Minister of New Zealand since 1999 and the CSES questionnaire in that country was applied in 2002. All four of these women were either re-elected in the election covered by the CSES (as in the case of the Philippines and New Zealand) or the type of election was legislative and therefore did not interfere with their presidential position (as in the case of Finland and Ireland). The only exception is Michelle Bachelet who was elected President of Chile for the first time in the elections covered by the CSES (in 2005, 2006).

In March 2010, 12 members of the Council of Women World Leaders were Presidents or Prime Ministers. Therefore, we may consider that having five countries with women leaders in the sample is a decent representation, although the fact that only one was a Prime Minister is clearly a big limitation. Some of these 35 countries had a female President or Prime Minister more recently. Recent presidents are Julia Gillard, the President of Australia since 2010, Dilma Rousseff, the President of Brazil since 2011, Doris Leuthard, the President of Switzerland between 2010 and 2011, and Micheline Calmy-Rey, the President of Switzerland (2011-2012). Concerning Prime Ministers, there are even more examples, namely Angela Merkel in Germany since 2005 (re-elected in 2009), Jóhanna Sigurdardóttir in Iceland since 2009, Han Myung Sook in South Korea between 2006 and 2007, and Mari Kiviniemi in Finland between 2010 and 2011. Since all these positions were occupied after the CSES questionnaires were fielded they are not part of the present analysis but they illustrate that the number of female national leaders is increasing throughout the world.

Cross sectional analysis

Descriptive analysis

The distinction between outgoing and incoming legislatures is extremely important because, depending on the research question being analysed, it might make more sense to concentrate on one or the other. That is an issue that has been overlooked in all studies that I am aware of, including Karp and Banducci (2008). If the goal of a project is to study satisfaction with democracy (as it is the case of this chapter), focusing on the outgoing legislature seems the most appropriate thing to do since it is illogical to expect that the newly elected government is

accountable for the actual status of democracy in a country⁵⁹. That elections just took place, mainly in the countries in which there was a change in the party in government, might slightly confuse the results. I tried to tackle this problem at least partly by including a variable that distinguishes those who won the elections from those who lost them, but it might not solve the whole problem and therefore it is important to keep this potential pitfall in mind. In order to avoid this problem, the ideal would have been to ask this question at the end of a legislative term – and that might be a good practice for future studies.

Concerning the analysis of this chapter, four countries were excluded from the list of 35 countries, namely Taiwan – because some macro indicators are very difficult (some impossible) to find, Chile – because this country does not fill in the variable ‘married’, and Hungary and Peru – because their survey was administered between rounds of elections and therefore it is impossible to identify winners and losers of elections (which is an important variable as will become clear soon). So I was left with 31 countries. See the table A.2 in the Annexes for a general overview of those countries and of the macro variables used for this model.

Figure 5.2 suggests that there might be a linear relationship between the average feeling of satisfaction with democracy in a country, its level of female MPs and its level of women in ministerial positions (outgoing legislature).

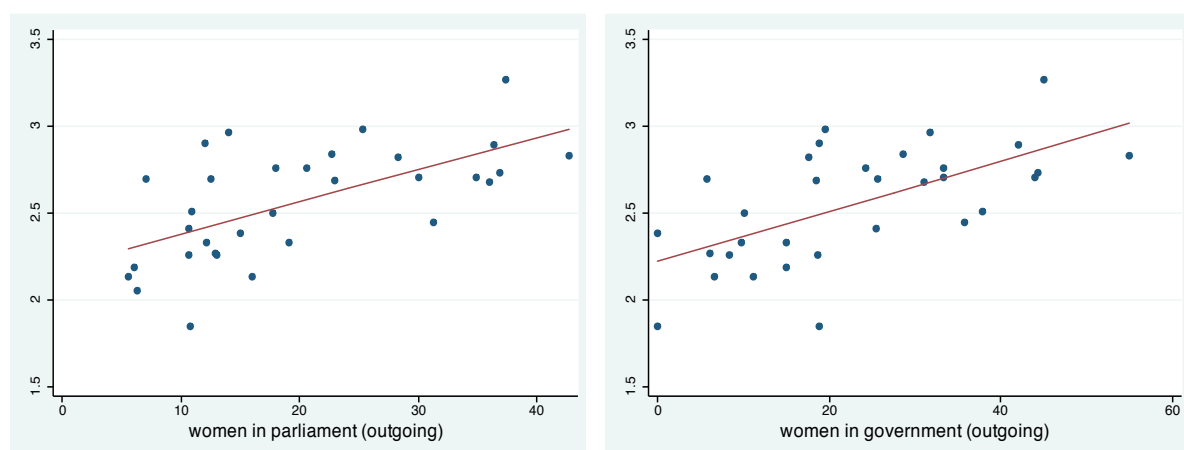


Figure 5.2: Mean of satisfaction with democracy according to the % of female MPs and % of women in ministerial positions

Note: Both slopes have p-values= 0.000 and are therefore significant (at the aggregate level, n=31). The correlations are in both cases 0.62, which is relatively high.

⁵⁹ CSES surveys are fielded shortly after the elections take place, so sometimes the new government might not even have taken office yet.

The results for the presence of a female President or PM go in the same general direction (table 5.2). The mean of satisfaction with democracy in countries where there is a female President or PM is significantly higher than in countries without. Looking at each country separately, we observe that all countries with a PM or President except the Philippines have a higher mean of satisfaction with democracy than those without.

Table 5.2: Level of satisfaction with democracy in countries with and without a female President or PM (outgoing)

	Mean of satisfaction with democracy (1-4)
Countries without a female P or PM	2.535
Countries with a female P or PM	2.745
T test between both groups	t= -19.6359 sig. = .000 n= 51045
Finland	2.734
Ireland	2.899
Philippines	2.502
New Zealand	2.705

It is important to keep in mind that the descriptive analysis done up until now does not have any kind of control. It suggests however that it makes sense to suspect that female representation may be associated with a higher level of satisfaction with democracy.

The model

The next step is to test whether the relation between the existence of women in political power and the citizens' level of satisfaction with democracy can be confirmed, using a fully specified model. Since there are level 1 and 2 variables and enough level 2 clusters (31 countries), multilevel analysis seems to be the most appropriate technique.

As mentioned before, the dependent variable, *satisfaction with democracy* is a four point scale (1=not at all satisfied to 4=very satisfied). This research applies a demanding model that uses all variables that according to the literature are likely to predict satisfaction with democracy. The rationale is that if when using this model the main independent variables (i.e. gender composition of political environment) still show significant effects, we may be quite confident that there is some kind of substantive relationship between them and the dependent variable.

A very important article for the purpose of the present chapter uses the CSES dataset to explore the relationship between satisfaction with democracy and the kind of electoral system (Aarts and Thomassen, 2008). These authors (as well as Norris (ed.), 1995: 234) found that, in contrast to the findings of Lijphart (1999), satisfaction with democracy seems to be negatively affected by a proportional system. Furthermore they detect that at the macro-level, satisfaction with democracy is primarily affected by the age of the democracy one lives in (Aarts and Thomassen, 2008: 17). This informs the inclusion in my model of two country level variables, respectively:

- *new democracy* (1=new democracy; 0=old democracy), according to Aarts and Thomassen (2008): 11, table 1. For details see table A.1 in the Annexes.

- electoral system – instead of using a categorical variable as Aarts and Thomassen (2008) did, I decided to use a more precise quantitative variable that measures the level of *disproportionality of the electoral system*. It is based on the formula developed by Michael Gallagher (1991), ranging from zero to 100 (data collected by Vatter and Bernauer, 2010). This variable is, in my opinion, a great improvement over previous measures of proportionality of the electoral system⁶⁰. The values correspond to the year prior to the studied elections.

A crucial predictor of citizens' satisfaction with democracy is the quality of the democracy, measured in the most objective (and exogenous) way possible. The present model (following Pippa Norris (ed.), 1995) uses the Freedom House scores. The Freedom House attributes scores (from 1 to 7, 1 being the best) to the political rights and civil liberties of each country, every year. In order to have enough variability between the countries included in the analysis, the scores for political rights and for civil liberties were summed into one variable. The values correspond to the year of the CSES election for each country⁶¹.

- *Freedom House Scores* (hypothetically from 2 to 14; in reality 2 to 6)⁶².

Another issue that is likely to influence the satisfaction with democracy (because usually people do not separate the economy from politics) is citizens' quality of life. Therefore an indicator of the GDP of each country was also included in the model:

- *Real GDP per capita (PPP\$)*. The values correspond to the year of the CSES election for each country⁶³.

⁶⁰ I thank the authors of the dataset, Adrian Vatter and Julian Bernauer, for letting me use it.

⁶¹ Source: Freedom in the World Country Ratings: 1972-2011, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=439> (accessed 15/6/2011).

⁶² This is easily comprehensible as all countries included in the analysis are democracies, most of them being very stable democracies.

Anderson and Guillory argue that a country's political institutions and constitutional reality systematically mediate attitudes about the democratic process among winners and losers (1997: 66). Their most important finding for the purpose of the present chapter is that the effect of being a winner or a loser is powerful and consistent in the expected direction, indicating that losers are almost always significantly less satisfied with the way democracy works than winners (p. 73). The same conclusion had already been reached by other authors, such as Norris (ed.), 1995: 234. This outcome justifies including the following individual level variable in the model:

- *winner* (1=if respondent voted for the party that won the election covered by CSES – see table A.2 in the Annexes for details; 0=if respondent voted for and losing party). Concerning parliamentary or legislative elections, I considered the party that got the most seats in parliament to be the winner. Only pre-electoral coalitions were considered. In other words, if, after an election, two parties decided to form a coalition, only the larger partner of the coalition was considered as winner. I opted for this solution since it is often not clear when the coalition was formed and whether the respondents were aware of it when they answered to the CSES questionnaire.

Some other variables at the individual level were included in the model. I am particularly interested in the result of sex, while the others are mainly controls.

- *female* (1=female; 0=male)
- *education* (8-item responses, ordinal)
- *age* (continuous)
- *employed* (1=employed part or full time; 0=not employed)
- *married* (1=married or living together as married; 0=single)

The model includes three main independent variables as well as their interactions with sex, as I want to be able to analyse women and men separately. The first main independent variable is the *percentage of female MPs and ministers*. Since the variables *percentage of female MPs* and *percentage women in ministerial positions* (as described for figure 5.1) are highly correlated (Pearson $r=0.7766$), and their interactions with gender are even further correlated (Pearson $r=0.8869$), they were summed up and gathered in one sole variable to avoid multicollinearity problems⁶³. The second and third main independent variables are the

⁶³ Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2000/> (accessed 11/7/2011). All year reports are available from that page. Note: the edition date does not correspond to the year of the analysis. I followed the latter, so for example the 2000 report has data for the year 1998.

⁶⁴ Both variables were originally continuous (hypothetically from 0 to 100%). They were summed up and divided by two, so that the final variable still varies (hypothetically) from 0 to 100%.

existence of a *female President* or *female PM*, just as described in table 5.1. Although the dataset has only few cases of countries with a female PM and president (mainly the former) I decided to keep them separated. Since there is no theory to help predicting what to expect from each one of the political layers, by keeping them separated I am better able to investigate how each one behaves regarding the dependent variable. Both variables are dummy variables: 0 when there is no female PM or President, 1 when there is.

Since the main independent variables refer to different levels of political power, and since different political levels have distinct degrees of power depending on the type of political regime, some controls of regime type were added to the model.

- Regime type according to Elgie (1998) - for details see table A.1 in the Annexes.

Reference category: semi-presidential.

- *presidential* (1=presidential; 0=otherwise)
- *parliamentary* (1=parliamentary; 0=otherwise)
- *other regime type*⁶⁵ (1=other; 0=otherwise)

Main analysis

Table 5.3 has the results of model 1 which employs the independent variables used by Karp and Banducci (2008) and it is important to compare my results with theirs, even if the techniques applied are different. The main difference is that while they used ordinary logit regression, I used a random intercept model – see details on that in chapter 6. Table 5.4 shows the results of three other models. Model 3 is the main model as it includes all the variables described in the previous section and uses multilevel ordinal regression (with random intercept) – which is the most appropriate technique considering that the dependent variable is ordinal. Model 2 consists of the complete model but without the macro control variables. Model 4 employs the same composition of independent variables but applies a different technique, namely a logistic random-intercept model, since it uses a dichotomised version of the original dependent variable (0=not satisfied with democracy; 1=satisfied with democracy). This is the model used to calculate the predicted probabilities of being satisfied with democracy (see figure 5.3), since it is much more feasible to use a logistic model than an ordinal model to calculate predicted probabilities (for the reasons explained in chapter 4).

⁶⁵ It includes: Assembly-independent (Switzerland) and Prime ministerial (Israel).

Table 5.3: Explaining satisfaction with democracy cross sectionally, Karp and Banducci's model

	Model 1: K&B (<i>gllamm</i>)
	Coef. (stand. error)
Female	-0.051 (0.039)
Education	0.042**** (0.006)
Age	0.002** (0.001)
Married	0.009 (0.021)
Employed (full or part time)	0.044** (0.021)
Children	0.003 (0.022)
% female MPs	0.029*** (0.010)
New Democracy	-0.907**** (0.225)
Presidential elections	0.348 (0.282)
% female MPS*female	-0.001 (0.002)
Cut1	-1.800 **** (0.256)
Cut2	0.228 (0.255)
Cut3	3.307**** (0.256)
N (level 1)	44346
N (level 2)	33 ⁶⁶
Log-likelihood	-47314.356
Level-2 Variance	.2936919

Standard errors in parentheses; **** p<0.001, *** p<0.01, ** p0.05, * p<0.1

⁶⁶ I tried to run this model with the total of 35 countries used by the authors but two countries were automatically excluded, Chile because it did not fill in variable 'married', and Austria which did not answer for variable 'children'.

Table 5.4: Explaining satisfaction with democracy cross sectionally, other models

	Model 2: Without macro level controls (gllamm)	Model 3: Complete model (gllamm)	Model 4: Complete model (xtmelogit)
	Coef. (stand. error)	Coef. (stand. error)	Exp(B) Coef. (stand. error)
Female	-0.086* (0.045)	-0.086* (-0.045)	0.918 -0.091* (0.053)
Education	0.048**** (0.007)	0.048**** (0.007)	1.049 0.045**** (0.008)
Age	0.002*** (0.001)	0.002*** (0.001)	1.002 0.001 (0.001)
Married	0.020 (0.023)	0.020 (0.023)	1.021 0.035 (0.027)
Employed (full or part time)	0.060** (0.024)	0.059** (0.024)	1.061 0.045 (0.028)
Winner	0.403**** (0.023)	0.403**** (0.023)	1.496 0.412**** (0.027)
% female MPs & ministers	0.051**** (0.007)	0.030**** (0.007)	1.031 0.028*** (0.010)
Female P	0.415** (0.177)	0.466* (0.259)	1.538 0.559* (0.301)
Female PM (only NZ)	-0.549 (0.498)	-0.267 (0.603)	0.705 -0.441 (0.535)
New Democracy		0.072 (0.381)	1.060 -0.160 (0.480)
Disproportionality of electoral system		0.020 (0.014)	1.001 0.003 (0.022)
Presidential regime type		-0.106 (0.259)	1.098 0.179 (0.364)
Parliamentary regime type		0.331* (0.177)	1.459 0.493* (0.255)
Other regime type		0.163 (0.410)	1.265 0.331 (0.460)
Freedom House Scores		0.042 (0.109)	0.969 -0.121 (0.165)
GDP		0.043** (0.018)	1.042 0.025 (0.025)
% female MPs & ministers*female	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.999 0.002 (0.002)
Female P*female	0.047 (0.069)	0.046 (0.069)	1.047 0.069 (0.083)
Female PM*female	0.302** (0.122)	0.302** (0.122)	1.353 0.230* (0.138)
Constant			-1.127 (0.948)
Cut1	-0.893**** (0.211)	.010 (.687)	
Cut2	1.132**** (0.210)	2.035*** (.687)	
Cut3	4.239**** (0.212)	5.142**** (.688)	
N (level 1)	34078	34078	34078
N (level 2)	31	31	31
Log-likelihood	-35691.388	-35683.544	-19521.098
Level-2 Variance	.41451228	.33989583	0.213945842

Standard errors in parentheses; **** p<0.001, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Karp and Banducci's model (table 5.3) works exactly as it is described in their paper: there is an association between the percentage of women in parliament and satisfaction with democracy of both women and men. Two variables included in their model (having children and simultaneity of presidential elections) were excluded from my own models because I could not find a logical reason to include them (and they are not significant in model 1). Furthermore, the use of the variable 'children' would cause me to lose Australia, which did not fill in that variable. I added a number of variables to Karp and Banducci's original model which had some significant gaps, mainly at the macro level where the only control it had was the age of democracy. That is certainly a key variable but insufficient. Variables such as the kind of electoral system, the freedom house scores and GDP are also important. At the individual level, the only variable added was the crucial one of being a winner or loser in the elections. The importance of the latter is unquestionable as the highly significant results in all models that include it show (see table 5.4). Unsurprisingly, those who voted for the party in office believe that democracy in their country works better.

Looking at the main independent variables in the model without any macro control, but with all individual level controls (table 5.4, model 2) we observe that in countries with a higher percentage of female MPs and ministers the satisfaction with democracy is also greater. The same can be said about countries in which the President is a woman. According to the data, having a female PM has no impact on men, but it does have for women, since the interaction term is significant for New Zealander female Prime Minister (Helen Clark). New Zealand is the only country in the dataset to have a woman Prime Minister. It seems that in New Zealand women are more satisfied with democracy compared to their male peers than in the other countries under analysis. However, this result needs to be confirmed using a dataset which includes more countries with a female PM.

Even when all macro level controls are added (model 3), the results for the main independent variables and the respective interactions remain practically unchanged. This suggests that the results are quite robust and that the kind of relationship between the gender composition of political power and the satisfaction with democracy is at least partially independent of other factors such as the 'objective' quality of democracy (freedom house score), the level of wealth of the country (GDP), its electoral system or regime type and so on.

To finalize this part of the analysis, let us briefly analyse the controls. Holding the other variables included in the model constant, there is a significant gender gap in the level of satisfaction with democracy, with women being significantly (though barely so) less satisfied

with democracy than men in all models except the first one⁶⁷. Education, age and being employed are all positively correlated with satisfaction with the democratic process in the first three models. Being a winner emerges as a strong predictor of level of satisfaction with democracy. Regarding level 2 variables, holding everything else constant, the data suggest that those who live in parliamentary regimes tend to position themselves higher on the scale of satisfaction with democracy than individuals who live in semi-presidential regimes (reference category). GDP is significant in the expected direction in the main model (table 5.4, model 3), while *kind of electoral system*⁶⁸, *freedom house scores* and *age of democracy* are not significant.

As stated above, model 4 (table 5.4) presents the results of a logistic random-intercept model using all the variables of the complete model (model 3). Regarding the main independent variables, both models have very similar results suggesting that it is appropriate to do the predicted probabilities using the former. Figure 5.3 presents the predicted probability⁶⁹ of being satisfied with the way democracy works by the percentage of women in parliament and in ministerial positions, in a country with a male President and a male Prime Minister. All other variables were kept constant on their most common value (in case of dummy variables) and on their average value⁷⁰. From figure 5.3 it is evident that the probability of evaluating democracy positively increases as the presence of women in the main national positions increases as well. When the latter is null or very close to null, less than half of the citizens of a country are predicted to be satisfied with democracy, while when that presence reaches 20%, the probability of being satisfied reaches 60%. Similarly, when both parliament and government are equally distributed between women and men, the probability of being satisfied with democracy almost reaches 80%.

⁶⁷ In Karp and Banducci's original model, female does not emerge as a significant variable either (2008: 113).

⁶⁸ In a not-shown model, I tried to use the same variables as Aarts and Thomassen (2008) did (instead of the used measure for disproportionality of the electoral system) and the result was the same, electoral system did not emerge as significant.

⁶⁹ The predicted values presented in this chapter were calculated using the STATA command 'predictnl' since *Clarify* does not work with multilevel data. I thank very much Tiffany Barnes for all her precious help with the use of this command.

⁷⁰ Averages for education and age were calculated separately for women and men and in all calculations the 31 countries that are part of the main analysis were considered. The values chosen for the dummy variables are the following: married, employed, winner, old democracy, and semi-presidential regime.

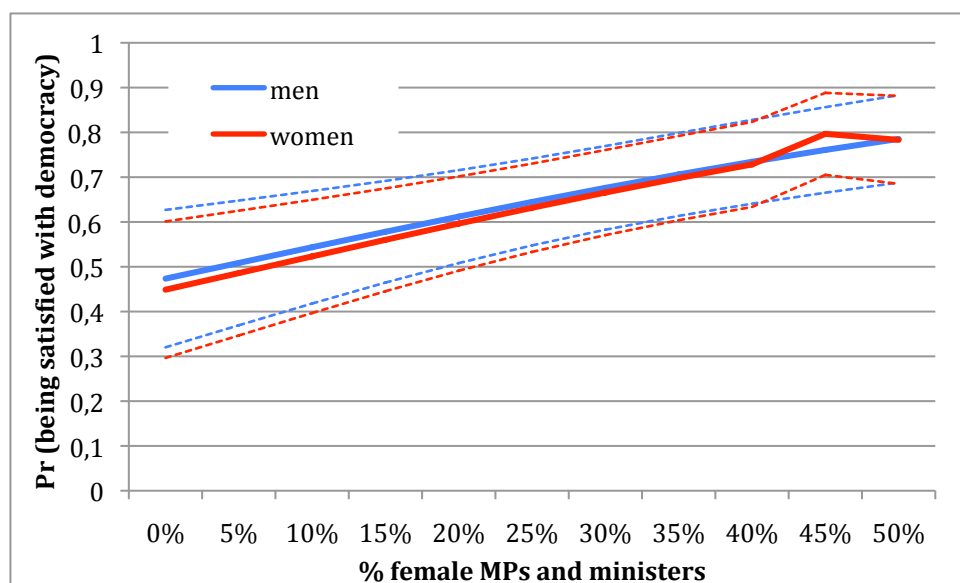


Figure 5.3: Predicted probabilities of being satisfied with democracy in a country with a male President and/or Prime Minister

Note: This figure follows model 4 (table 5.4). Dashed lines indicate the 90% confidence interval.

As was clearly demonstrated in table 5.4, there is no difference in satisfaction with democracy between women and men. The only exception seems to occur when the percentage of female MPs and ministers reaches 45%, in which the probability of being satisfied with democracy is, for the first time, slightly higher among women than men. However, the differences are very small and seem to vanish as the gender composition of political power reaches parity, which is somehow illogical, and therefore should not be given too much importance. In figure 5.4, we can observe the predicted probability of being satisfied with democracy in countries with no female leader, in countries with a female President and in countries with a female Prime Minister – keeping the percentage of female MPs and ministers at their average for the 31 countries (21.5%). The results from table 5.3 for female President are confirmed, since in those countries the probability of being satisfied with democracy is around 10% higher than in countries without a female leader. Regarding the significant result found for the interaction between the existence of a female Prime Minister and gender, figure 5.4 does not show much evidence of it. Although the predicted probability of being satisfied with democracy is slightly higher for women, the difference between women and men is extremely small. As already stated, this analysis for female Prime Minister requires a bigger sample of countries with a female Prime Minister. So, in general, the results so far suggest that whatever mechanisms are operating behind the potential impact of the presence of women in political power, they apply equally to women and men.

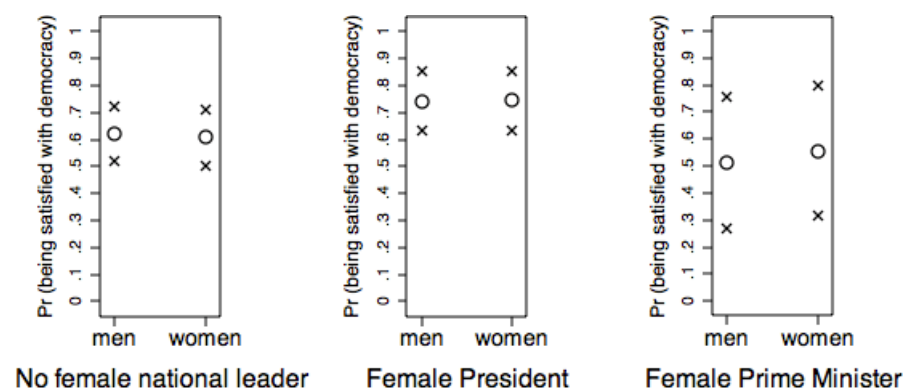


Figure 5.4: Predicted probabilities of being satisfied with democracy in a country with no female national leader; with a female President; and with a female Prime Minister

Note 1: The percentage of female MPs and ministers were kept at its average for the 31 countries analysed (21.5%).

Note 2: Dots are predicted values, while the crosses refer to the 90% confidence intervals.

Longitudinal analysis

Rational behind this part of the analysis

One conclusion is that in countries where there are more women in politics, citizens tend to be more satisfied with democracy than in countries in which there are fewer. However, the proposition that, in countries where the presence of women in politics increases, the probability that citizens are satisfied with democracy also increases requires verification. This constitutes obviously a much more demanding test for the idea tackled by this thesis and, as far as I am aware, it has never been done before across countries. A positive result would almost rule out the hypothesis that the relationship found in the first part of this chapter is the result of spurious correlations. Although all possible measures were followed to ensure that that risk was minimised as much as possible (through the inclusion of macro controls), a positive longitudinal analysis is the only way to exclude the possibility that the political and/or social context of a certain country explains both the gender composition of political power and the level of satisfaction with democracy among citizens. Even so, one could still argue that not even this analysis is enough because political and social contexts in a country change hence could provoke both effects simultaneously. Nevertheless, both models are complementary and both together offer a more reliable result.

Would a negative result in this analysis cancel the validity of what was found before? Not necessarily, firstly because very small increases of women in key political positions (say less than 10%) are not likely to be noticed by citizens mainly if the country already has a reasonable percentage of women in power. Furthermore, in countries where the presence of female politicians has been quite high in the last decade, such as Finland or Norway, an

increase, even if considerable, might not be perceived. So, although a positive result would strongly confirm the results, a negative one does not necessarily contradict them. In that case, it is necessary to do an analysis country by country in order to try to understand each case.

Descriptive analysis

Some of the CSES module 2 countries were also part of CSES module 1 and 3 (which are respectively previous and later waves), indicating that it is possible to do some longitudinal analysis⁷¹. Accordingly I selected 27 countries – including only those countries that did a survey in at least two different points in time (which may or may not be in the same module⁷²) and that had valid answers for all variables that compose the previously described model (model 3 of table 5.4), (see table A.3 in the Annexes). For 12 countries (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Japan, Romania, Slovenia, South Korea, USA) I have two points in time; for 11 countries (Australia, Czech Republic, Israel, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland) three time points, and for four countries (Germany, Iceland, Mexico, Poland) four or five points in time. It is important to note that the time points do not correspond to the same year in each country. In fact the differences are quite big. For example in the first time point there are countries like Australia, Czech Republic, Israel, Romania, Spain, and the USA, which had their surveys conducted in 1996, while Japan and South Korea had them in 2004. Furthermore, the number of years between each time point also differs, from a minimum of one year to a maximum of eight years, although the average time space is around 4.75 years. All details can be found in the table A.3.

Figure 5.5 shows how the countries that are the objects of this analysis figure in terms of the main independent variables. As in the previous section, we are interested in the outgoing legislatures since the incoming ones cannot be accountable for the way democracy is working. The first time point (represented by the dark blue bars) shows the most dramatic differences between the countries regarding the percentage of women in parliament and in ministerial positions. In the second time point (light blue bars) it is apparent that most countries increased the presence of women, with the exception of Russia, which stayed the same, and of France, which decreased. While some countries increased only slightly (such as

⁷¹ In this section I am not doing any replication so I considered all countries for which there was data available. So countries like Russia enter in this analysis.

⁷² For example, Portugal 2002 and 2005 are both in module 2, but most commonly each country appears only once in each module.

Czech Republic, South Korea, Japan, Israel, Mexico, Portugal, Norway and so on), others saw their rates more than doubling. That is the case for example of Romania, Belgium, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Iceland. Among the Scandinavian countries it is Denmark that experienced the biggest increase (of 10%). The remaining three time points (orange bars) vary a lot and it is more common to observe some small decreases.

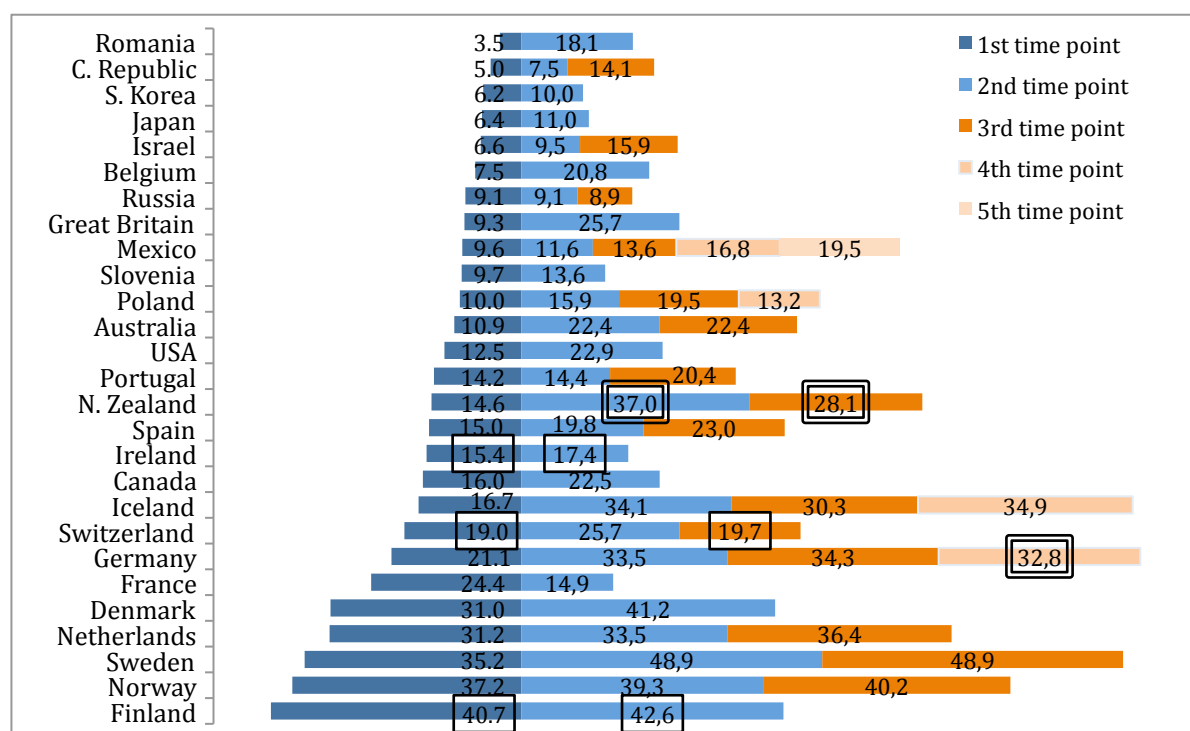


Figure 5.5: Percentage of women in parliament and in ministerial positions by time point and by country (outgoing legislatures)

Note: Simple squares identify the presence of a female President and double dashed squares of a female Prime Minister.

This group of countries also allows for testing some cases that have a wave before and a wave after a woman was elected Prime Minister (New Zealand and Germany) or President (Switzerland). Regarding presidencies, there are two other countries (Ireland and Finland) that had a female President in both waves covered by the CSES. While no comparison within the country is possible in these cases, it is still interesting to compare them with other countries (similarly to what was done in the first section of this chapter). In figure 5.5, Presidents are indicated with simple squares, while Prime Ministers with double-dashed squares.

In 1999, Helen Clark became the second female Prime Minister of New Zealand (the first elected one), following Jenny Shipley who was in office between December 1997 and

December 1999⁷³. Clark occupied the position until November 2008, when she lost the elections to the National Party. The CSES 1996 wave for New Zealand (1st time point) corresponds to the moment before the country had its first female Prime Minister, the 2002 wave (2nd time point) was done at the beginning of Helen Clark's second mandate, and the last wave (2008 – 3rd time point) corresponds to the moment in which Helen Clark lost her position. It is important to notice that all three waves for New Zealand correspond to the period after the reformation of the electoral system, moving from a majoritarian system (first past the post) to a mixed member proportional system. In fact, 1996 was the first election that applied the new system, so there is no risk that that particular change is responsible for the results we observe.

At the time the CSES questionnaire was applied in 2005 in Germany (third time point), Angela Merkel had just become the first-ever female Chancellor; while in the following wave, 2009 (4th time point), she had just been re-elected. The 1998 and 2002 waves (first and second time points, respectively) correspond to Germany before having gone through that experience.

The data for Switzerland is as peculiar as its electoral system. Since every year a new President of the Confederation (i.e. of the country) is elected by the Federal Assembly, in the three CSES waves there was a female President in the first (1999) and in the third (2007) time points, but not in the second one (2003). The President in 1999-2010 was Ruth Dreifuss who was the first female President. In 2007, the second-ever female President was elected, Micheline Calmy-Rey.

The two Presidency steady-state cases are Finland and Ireland. In Finland, Tarja Halonen has been President since 2000, covering both CSES waves (2003 and 2007). Similarly, Mary MacAleese has been President of Ireland since 1997, and therefore occupied the position when both Irish surveys were applied (2002 and 2007).

Main analysis

The hierarchical structure of the data used in this section consists of a three-level model in which citizens are nested in time points that are also nested in countries (see figure 5.6). While in the two-level models used up until now (i.e. citizens nested in countries) we had a

⁷³ The 1996 elections (held in October) were won by the National Party, under the leadership of Jim Bolger. During Bolger's mandate, Shipley got increasing support within the party, which led to Bolger's resignation and Shipley's substitution. Shipley's government was unstable because of problems with the coalition party New Zealand First. In the 1999 elections, Jenny Shipley as leader of the National competed against Helen Clark, leader of the Labour. The latter won.

random intercept per each country only; in the three-level model there is an extra random intercept for each combination of time point and country. Although this model corrects for the heteroskedasticity provoked by the fact that individuals are clustered in time points within countries, it does not correct for potential time-serial autocorrelation, which is likely to be a problem in longitudinal data. However, I argue that since I am dealing with independent samples (i.e. different individuals) that risk is very small.

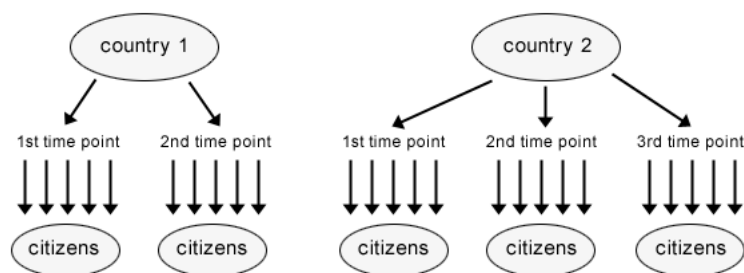


Figure 5.6: Graphic representation of the hierarchical structure of the data used in this section

The model used in this section is exactly the same as the one presented before (model 3 of table 5.4), with the difference that all level-3 measures that change throughout time were collected for each time point, namely, the GDP and the freedom house scores. Since the dependent variable is the same as before (ordinal), also here multilevel ordinal regression (with random intercept) should be used. However, after several trials, the appropriate Stata command (*gllamm*) did not converge and therefore another command for continuous data was used (*xtmixed*). Although clearly not the ideal solution, the results are very likely to be identical⁷⁴.

⁷⁴ I have replicated the three models of table 5.4 using *xtmixed* instead of *gllamm* and the results are alike.

Table 5.5: Explaining satisfaction with democracy through longitudinal analysis

	Coef. (stand. error)
Female	-0.046**** (0.010)
Education	0.017**** (0.001)
Age	0.000** (0.000)
Married	0.017*** (0.005)
Employed (full or part time)	0.011** (0.005)
Winner	0.163**** (0.005)
% female MPs & ministers	0.004 (0.003)
Female P	0.184* (0.103)
Female PM (only NZ)	-0.124 (0.122)
New Democracy	-0.342*** (0.104)
Disproportionality of electoral system	0.003 (0.007)
Presidential regime type	0.173* (0.098)
Parliamentary regime type	0.203** (0.076)
Other regime type	-0.010 (0.131)
Freedom House Scores	-0.046** (0.021)
GDP	-0.008** (0.004)
% female MPs & ministers*female	0.000 (0.000)
Female P*female	0.114*** (0.025)
Female PM*female	0.015 (0.017)
Constant	2.734**** (0.158)
N (level 1)	93340
N (level 2)	74
N (level 3)	27
Log-likelihood	-100829.62
Level-2 Variance	.0258513
Level-3 Variance	.012478

Standard errors in parentheses; **** p<0.001, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5.5 indicates that we cannot assume that an increase in the percentage of women in the political environment provokes an increase in citizens' satisfaction with democracy, since the coefficient for the variable *percentage of female MPs & ministers* is clearly non-significant. However, regarding countries with a female President or Prime Minister, we confirm the outcomes from the first section of the chapter. Citizens (women and men) who live in countries with a female President tend to feel more satisfied with democracy, and the appearance of a female Prime Minister is likely to be associated with an increase in the level

of satisfaction with democracy among women (but not among men). While the result for the Presidency does not add much to the previous outcome – since there is only one country that has waves with and without a female President, Switzerland – the result for Prime Minister got a bit more robust, since besides New Zealand, now there is Germany as well – both with waves before and after.

These results were double-checked through models (not shown⁷⁵) that included either dummy variables for time points or dummy variables for countries. While the former enforces between country fixed effects, the latter enforces within country fixed effects, i.e. effects over time. As expected, the former gave the same results as the analysis for a single time-point (table 5.4), confirming that in countries where the female presence in parliament and government is higher, citizens tend to be more satisfied with democracy. On the other hand, the model including within country fixed effects did not change the results found for percentage of female MPs and government in table 5.5. So we confirm that the variation over time in the percentages of female presence in parliament and government is not enough to produce changes in citizens' level of satisfaction with democracy.

One of the reasons why the expected outcome for the percentage of women in parliament and in ministerial positions is not observable here might be related to the fact that in some countries the increases are very small and in others there are small decreases. It is important to emphasise once again that it might very well be that there are more important explanatory factors of satisfaction with democracy than the presence of women in politics. Anyway, the next step is to do an analysis country by country in order to understand the peculiarities of each situation. All level 3 variables (country level) are obviously excluded – otherwise they would be dropped. I tried to include dummy variables for time points and level 2 variables (time point level and country level, such as the GDP and freedom house scores), but due to multicollinearity problems those variables are almost always dropped. Hence, I decided to keep them out. It is therefore important to keep in mind that the following analysis does not consider the chronological order of the facts, nor does it control for any change that might have occurred in the country along with the change in the gender composition of political power. The only controls employed are at the individual level.

The countries that have gone through an increase of more than 10% of female MPs and ministers are presented in table 5.6; while in the table A.4 (Annexes) all the remaining countries are shown. The rationale for splitting the countries this way is that below 10% it is

⁷⁵ Ordinal regressions (*ologit*) were run.

improbable that the citizens would even perceive the increase. However, the option for this precise threshold is more or less arbitrary since whether a certain increase is perceived by citizens or not depends on each situation. Factors such as the kind of electoral system and the election campaign are very important. Regarding the latter, if the women had a strong presence during the election campaign and their gender was an issue it is more likely that their election was noticed and that it was associated with change (Koch, 1997; Hansen, 1997). The disadvantage of dealing with so many countries is that it is impossible to be aware of all those details that could affect results. Keeping all these pitfalls in mind, let us see how each country behaves in terms of the level of satisfaction with democracy in order to be able to make more sense of the results from table 5.5.

Looking at table 5.6 the most striking result is the absence of a pattern between the countries, strongly suggesting that the small changes in the gender composition of parliament and government do not play a strong role in predicting citizens' level of satisfaction with democracy. Yet, a quick count of the number of positive and significant coefficients (in bold) in table 5.6 and in table A.4 reveals many more positives (12) than negatives (3)⁷⁶. Considering that the changes in the gender composition of political power of all countries in table A.4 are minor⁷⁷, we clearly have to attribute those three coefficients to other causes. The only exception might be Korea since it approved a quota law in 2004, which was first implemented for the 1st time point elections (April 2004). The potential debate around the topic as well as the significant increase in the percentage of female MPs (from 5.5% to 13% in those elections, see figure 5.1) could explain the result. The causes of the positive and significant coefficients of table 5.6 are also unclear; while some might actually be connected to the presence of more women in power, others certainly have other causes. However, the simple fact that the group of countries that suffered the biggest increase in the presence of women in politics shows the highest number of positive and significant coefficients at least suggests confirmation of the results obtained in the first part of the chapter.

Looking now in more detail at table 5.6, we observe that only four countries behave according to what the theoretical framework (chapter 3) predicted, i.e. periods in which the presence of women in political power is higher are associated with higher levels of

⁷⁶ It is also interesting to observe that in the table in the Annexes, none of the three positive significant coefficients corresponds to the interaction term (i.e. to women). The number of countries included in each table is 14 in table 5.6, and 13 in table A.4.

⁷⁷ Including the three countries where those positive significant coefficients were observed: Finland (where the % of female MPs and ministers went from 40.7% to 42.6%), South Korea (from 6.2% to 10%) and Slovenia (from 9.7% to 13.6%) – see figure 6.5.

satisfaction with democracy both among women and men, namely Belgium, Denmark, Spain and Sweden. The exact same number of countries, four, show no sign of changes in their level of satisfaction with democracy as the gender composition of their political environment varies, namely Australia, Romania, Great Britain, and USA. Yet another group of countries is associated with an increase in the satisfaction with democracy among women but with a significant decrease among men – those are: Iceland, Israel and Mexico. So, in general, there are more countries with a sign of impact than without it but we cannot talk about a general trend.

Table 5.6: Explaining satisfaction with democracy by country

Country	Coef. (stand. error) % female MPs & ministers	Exp(B)	Coef. (stand. error) % female MPs &ministers*female	Exp(B)	N
Australia	-0.010 (0.008)	.990	-0.013 (0.011)	.987	4148
Belgium	0.029**** (0.007)	1.030	0.003 (0.009)	1.003	4874
Denmark	0.038**** (0.009)	1.039	0.017 (0.013)	1.017	3656
Germany	-0.032**** (0.007)	.968	0.008 (0.009)	1.008	6666
Prime Minister	0.112 (0.085)	1.118	0.259** (0.117)	1.296	
Iceland	-0.075**** (0.006)	.927	0.028*** (0.008)	1.028	4524
Israel	-0.127**** (0.015)	.880	0.035* (0.019)	1.035	2576
Mexico	-0.037**** (0.009)	.964	0.031*** (0.012)	1.032	6786
New Zealand	0.023* (0.013)	1.024	-0.023 (0.261)	.978	5723
Prime Minister	-0.980**** (0.261)	.375	0.724** (0.355)	2.063	
Romania	0.007 (0.008)	1.007	0.000 (0.012)	1.000	1986
Spain	0.046*** (0.017)	1.047	0.004 (0.023)	1.004	2578
Sweden	0.027*** (0.009)	1.028	0.009 (0.012)	1.009	2794
Switzerland	0.846**** (0.179)	2.330	-0.630*** (0.238)	.533	4177
President	5.438**** (1.132)	229.930	-3.991*** (1.503)	.018	
Great Britain	-0.017** (0.008)	.983	-0.002 (0.011)	.998	2913
USA	-0.036*** (0.013)	.965	0.016 (0.017)	1.016	1932

Standard errors in parentheses; **** p<0.001, *** p<0.01, ** p0.05, * p<0.1

Note 1: This tables includes only the countries which went through a considerable increase in their percentage of women in parliament and in ministerial positions. The remaining countries can be found in the table A.

Note 2: The other independent variables included in the analysis (but not shown) are: female, education, age, employed, married, and winner.

Table 5.6 also shows (grey rows) the three countries that had a female Prime Minister or President (New Zealand, Germany and Switzerland). In New Zealand, the election of Helen Clark coincided with a considerable increase in the presence of women in parliament and in government and it is therefore difficult to distinguish one effect from the other – even if in the third time point the percentage of female MPs and ministers decreased again while Clark kept her position (see figure 5.5). According to the data, in the two waves in which Clark was the Prime Minister of New Zealand, the odds that women were ‘very satisfied’ with democracy (vs. all other categories of the same variable)⁷⁸ were 106% greater than in the year in which Jim Bolger was the Prime Minister. The respective odds ratio for men went in the opposite direction; the odds that they felt ‘very satisfied with democracy’ were 62.5% lower when Clark was in charge.

In Germany, while the percentage of female MPs and ministers seems to be associated with a decrease in the level of satisfaction with democracy among both women and men; the election of Angela Merkel marked a significant increase in that feeling among women. The odds of feeling ‘very satisfied with democracy’ among women increased 29.6% compared to the waves before Merkel.

Finally, in Switzerland, both the increase in the percentage of women in parliament and in government and the presence of a female President are associated with significantly lower levels of satisfaction with democracy among women, and significantly higher levels among men. Since this outcome is contrary to all theoretical expectations, it clearly suggests that something else is accounting for the level of satisfaction with democracy.

Conclusions

This chapter had two main objectives. The first was to test empirically one of the theoretical ideas developed in chapter 3, according to which there is a relationship between the presence of women in political power and citizens’ satisfaction with democracy. This idea was corroborated, based on citizens’ opinions, by chapter 4, but it was also important to test it from another perspective, perhaps a more ‘factual’ or realistic one. The second objective was to test the potential different effects of the diverse levels of national branches of political power, checking whether it is the importance of the political position or the collective vs. dyadic representation the most relevant factor in determining the association with satisfaction with democracy.

⁷⁸ ‘One of the assumptions underlying ordinal logistic regression is that the relationship between each pair of outcome groups is the same’: <http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/stata/dae/ologit.htm> (accessed 1/8 2011).

Using a large sample composed of sufficiently varied countries, the analyses presented in this chapter confirm that there are reasons to believe that there is a positive relationship between the feminisation of political power and the citizens' level of satisfaction with democracy. However, it also clearly shows that it is a complex relationship and overall, as expected, a quite weak one. Various levels of both the legislative and executive branches were examined: parliament and government, President and Prime Minister. The unclearness of the results obtained for MPs and ministers (i.e. the fact that I got different results in both analyses), and the paucity of cases with a female Prime Minister (in the first analysis) and with a female President (in the second analysis) mean this analysis is not the final one on this issue. It does nevertheless allow for drawing conclusions, although some of them should be validated using different datasets in the future.

It is doubtless true that in countries where the collective representation of women is higher, citizens (women and men) tend to be more satisfied with democracy, but the fact that the longitudinal analysis did not clearly support this outcome leaves open the possibility that at least part of that relationship is provoked by the political and social context of the country which smooth the progress of both female representation and of citizens' satisfaction with democracy. However, as mentioned before, this might also be the result of too little variation in all variables over the short time-span available in the CSES dataset. This is even more likely to be the case since seven out of the fourteen countries that saw a considerable increase in their presence of women in politics show some sign of impact (table 5.6). It would be important to replicate this analysis using a dataset with more time points.

The analysis of President and Prime Minister (instead of parliament and government) has two great advantages. The first is that it is less likely to be the cause of a specific national political and social context, since many peculiar factors – mainly inherent to the political parties – play a role. The second advantage is that it is very straightforward to isolate the moment before and after both for the citizens and for the analyst – while in the case of collective representation everything is much more blurred. In this sense, the outcomes for the national leaders are more reliable. That is also the case because both analyses (cross sectional and longitudinal) gave the same result. This part of the analysis should however be replicated having more cases of countries with a female leader. As it is now, it is important to clarify that this analysis was based on essentially five cases: Finland, Ireland, Philippines, New Zealand and Germany.

The fact that women (but not men) evaluated democracy more positively after the election of a female Prime Minister in New Zealand and in Germany seems a pretty robust

result for two reasons. Firstly, because only women were affected (although slightly against the prediction that both genders sexes should be influenced) it is more likely that the cause is really a female politician and not something else. Second, they are two parliamentary countries in which the importance of the role of Prime Minister is unquestionable and therefore if anyone is likely to provoke an effect it is they.

Slightly less robust is the supposed effect of a female President, although also here it is clear that there is something – it is just less apparent what that could be. The most puzzling result is the fact that the hypothetical impact is observed both on women and on men, in contrast to Prime Ministers, who only have an effect on women. It is clear that with the exception of the Philippines (a presidential regime), in both parliamentary cases, Presidents are considerably less important than the PM. So it would make sense if the effect of a female President was smaller or nonexistent, but there is no reason why a female President has apparently an impact on both sexes while a female PM only on women. My only guess for this difference is that it is something country specific and does not directly depend on the kind of representation⁷⁹.

To summarise: the theoretical prediction that there is a relationship between the presence of women in political power and citizens' satisfaction with democracy was borne out overall in the empirical analysis, but it is not clear whether only women or whether both women and men evaluate more positively a democracy with more female presence. Regarding the second objective, the analyses here performed suggest that dyadic representation (or the presence of a very important female figure) is more determinant than having a collective representation – but the possibility that this is due to the analysis being easier to perform could not be ruled out.

⁷⁹ This argument is supported by the fact that in table 6.5 there are a few significant interaction terms, also for countries without any female national leader, so it does suggest that people use the mechanisms behind the impact differently.

Part III: Level of political involvement (social meaning)

6 – Citizens' political participation and female representation in political power

Introduction

This chapter marks the beginning of the third Part of this dissertation, which introduces the second dimension of the relationship between citizens and politics: the level of political engagement. This can be measured in two ways. The first, which will be analysed in this chapter, is through the frequency with which political activities are performed. The second way of measuring the level of political engagement is from the point of view of attitudes and it includes factors such as interest in politics, frequency of discussing political issues, and so on. That will be the object of analysis in the next chapter (chapter 7).

The persistent gender gap in some political activities (except voting) and in many political attitudes (described in chapter 2) has been a challenging puzzle to political researchers in the last decade. While some causes of gender gaps in education or free time have been identified (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001: 359), others remain unclear. What remains unclear has been attributed to the different political socialization that boys and girls go through (for example, Conway, Steuernagel et al., 1997; Atkeson and Rapoport, 2003; Fox and Lawless, 2003; Lawless and Fox, 2005; Verba, Schlozman et al., 2005; Moore, 2005). As Susan Hansen has suggested, if the gender gap in political engagement were a simple function of individuals' resources, we would expect it to have diminished (or disappeared) over time as women's access to education has increased (1997: 76).

There are many different ways in which people (mainly children but also adults) become politically socialised. The argument of this thesis is that underrepresented groups in political power internalise the idea that they are not able to be politically active. So once that group gains stronger representation it contributes to a change in the way that group evaluates their own capacity to rule – this is what Mansbridge names 'social meaning' (1999) and Charles Taylor and Anne Philips call the 'politics of recognition' (1992; 1995). This argument ought to apply to the case of women. The role model effect is a further name for a parallel theory according to which visible women are likely to be role models to other women due to the symbolic significance they carry with them (see figure 3.1). Unlike the evaluation of the political system, the level of political engagement is expected to rise mainly among

women, and only in particular cases also among men, since the only potential mechanism likely to increase the level of political engagement among men is the novelty effect and the fact that a gender equilibrated political environment is more plausible to be seen as open, and fair.

This chapter focuses on forms of political participation in which there is an established gender gap, so activities such as voting are excluded. The included activities range from conventional forms of participation (such as supporting or simply contacting a political party or a politician), to more unconventional ones, such as participating in a protest, march or demonstration. Previous research (Verba, H. Nie et al., 1978) and scholarship focusing on southern Europe (Morales, 1999; Baum and Espirito-Santo, 2004) demonstrated that the more unconventional the form of participation the stronger the gender gap. However, other studies about western countries failed to find gender differences in the most unconventional forms of participations (Verba, Schlozman et al., 1995; Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2001).

To identify the forms of political participation that are more likely to be affected by the presence of female politicians is the main objective of this chapter. According to the theoretical approach of this thesis, the expectation is that a high female representation in political power will contribute to a decrease in the differences in political participation that prevail between women and men. Accordingly, the first hypothesis of this chapter is that the relationship between the presence of female politicians and citizens' political involvement is stronger in the forms of political activity where the gender gap is overall deeper. Testing this hypothesis implies firstly understanding what are the forms of political activity where the gender gap is overall deeper. Secondly it implies analysing if, in those forms of activity (more than in others), it happens that the gender gap is lower in the countries where the female presence in political power is higher. If that is the case, this hypothesis is confirmed.

Another hypothesis turns on the observation that it is not so much the level of gender gap that matters for the intensity of the effect, but the nature of the political activity. The forms of political activity here analysed vary from more private forms of action to very public activities. Talking to other people to persuade them to vote for a particular party or candidate is an activity that is usually done within an intimate circle. People typically try to persuade family, friends or colleagues to vote for a certain party. Then there are some political actions that can be more or less public, for example, contacting a politician or supporting a political party or candidate. If the contact with the politician is done in the street it can be very public, but if done through a letter it can also be a quite private action. The same applies to

supporting a political party if we think of diverse possibilities, such as attending a meeting (public) or giving a financial contribution (can be private). Finally, there are some clearly public actions, namely participating in protests, marches or demonstrations. As Peter Van Aelst and Stefaan Walgrave state: ‘demonstrating is first and foremost a social affair. Only 7 percent of the protesters we interviewed had come to the protest on their own; the majority came with family, friends or colleagues’ (2001: 481). There is also the fact that nobody can expect to go to a demonstration anonymously. Since we know that changes within the private sphere take always much longer to happen, we should expect the impact to be stronger concerning the more public forms of participation.

Finally, a third hypothesis is that since we are talking about female politicians who should serve as role models, we expect their impact to be bigger in the area where they are visible, i.e. in conventional politics. Expectations regarding which levels of political power should have an impact on which political activities are more difficult to predict.

It is important to emphasise that as in the case of chapter 5, this impact is extremely difficult to prove and the best result we can have is a strong suggestion that there is such an impact. The three risks described in the Introduction (chapter 1) plainly apply to this chapter, namely the danger of spurious correlation, the probability of reciprocal relationship and endogeneity. Although I try to deal with these problems and find solutions whenever possible, they cannot be completely overcome.

As in chapter 5, data from the *Comparative Study of Electoral Systems* (CSES), module 2 are used. Besides seeking to find out what forms of political participation are more likely to be affected by the presence of female politicians, this chapter also aims to replicate a study by Karp and Banducci (2008), which concluded that female MPs play no role in the gender gap in political activities.

This chapter is organised the following way. In the next section, the research design is described, immediately followed by the analysis. After a section on descriptive analysis, the result of five random intercept models is presented. The chapter finishes with a reflection on the resulting predicted probabilities followed by some conclusions.

Research design

The CSES module 2 questionnaire has two sets of questions that permit the investigation of different kinds of political participation. While the first set refers to activities done during the most recent election, the second set refers to activities done in the past five years or so. The wording of the first set of questions, which comprises two activities, is the following:

Here is a list of things some people do during elections. Which (if any) did you do during the most recent election?

- a) Talked to other people to persuade them to vote for a particular party or candidate?
- b) Showed your support for a particular party or candidate by, for example, attending a meeting, putting up a poster, or in some other way?

The second one, which comprises three kinds of activities, looks like this:

Over the past five years or so, have you done any of the following things to express your views about something the government should or should not be doing?

- a) Contacted a politician or government official either in person, in writing, or some other way?
- b) Taken part in a protest, march or demonstration?
- c) Worked together with people who shared the same concern?

For both sets of questions the answer categories are simply 'yes' or 'no' (besides 'refuse' and 'don't know').

The impact of the feminisation of parliament on women's (and men's) political engagement was analysed across many countries, using the same dataset by Jeffrey Karp and Susan Banducci (2008). Looking at exactly the same two sets of questions, these authors did not observe any impact, either on the citizens considered together or on women alone. However, before we accept that there is no relationship at all between the presence of women in political power and women's engagement in politics, there are three things that might usefully be done differently.

The most important is that they considered each set of question as an index, and therefore disregarded the possibility that the activities within each set may have different results. As described in the introduction, it is to be expected that diverse forms of political participation are differently influenced by the presence of female politicians. By keeping them separated, we are better able to understand the differences that might exist between them.

The second point has to do with the independent variable, the descriptive representation of women in parliament. Here, there are two issues to be raised. The first is that considering the way both sets of questions were posed, one referring to the most recent election and the other to the past five years, they require two different independent variables. The former implies looking at the incoming legislature to get an indication of who the women

present during the campaign were. The second requires considering the past five years and therefore taking the outgoing legislature as the independent variable seems more appropriate. Karp and Banducci used only one measure and it is not clear from the paper to exactly which moment it refers. The second issue regarding this point, which was already mentioned before in this thesis, is that there is no reason to suspect that the feminisation of parliament alone has an impact (and not the other political layers). Furthermore, there is no way of isolating the impact of the parliament from the impact of the other layers of political power. In this sense, it seems important to control for the feminisation of all other national layers of political power.

The third point of contention with Karp's and Banducci's paper (2008) is that they made ordinary logit regressions using robust standard errors clustered by country. Although this technique is not wrong, the only thing it does, as the authors themselves say, is to estimate more consistent standard errors, it does not affect the coefficients. A random intercept model has the important advantage of allowing each country to have a different random intercept.

Descriptive analysis

As mentioned before, this chapter uses the dataset CSES, module 2. Furthermore, as far as possible (at least at first) it replicates Karp and Banducci's analysis, therefore the same 35 countries were considered⁸⁰ (see table A.1 for details on those countries). The main independent variables used here are the same as in chapter 5 (see figure 5.1 and table 5.1). Since details on the dataset, on these 35 countries and on the main independent variables were given in chapter 5, they will not be repeated here. Instead we will concentrate on the dependent variables of interest. The first question of interest in this regard (which will allow testing the first hypothesis) is in which form of political participation the gender gap is more dramatic. Table 6.1 shows the results of five very simple multilevel logistic regressions, each having a form of political activity as dependent variable and all of them having *gender* as the only independent variable.

⁸⁰ Although, as will become clear later, a few countries are automatically excluded from the analysis due to missing variables.

Table 6.1: Measuring the gender gap's size in the five forms of political participation

		Coef. (stand. error)	Exp(B)	N (level 1) N (level 2)
During the most recent election...	To persuade others to vote for a party or candidate	-.345**** (.023)	.708	54061 35
	To show support for party or candidate	-.346**** (.028)	.708	53904 35
Over the past five years...	To take part in a protest or demonstration	-.199**** (.030)	.820	52146 34
	To work together with people who share the same concern	-.289**** (.023)	.749	51972 34
	To contact a politician	-.342**** (.027)	.710	52211 34

Standard errors in parentheses; **** p<0.001, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Note 1: Multilevel logistic regressions. The only independent variable included in the models was *gender*.

Note 2: Korea was excluded from the analyses regarding the past five years, because the questions were asked in a different way in this country and the total of valid answers was very small (around 100). That is why the N (level 2) is 34 instead of 35.

The main result from table 6.1, although not at all unexpected, is that there is a significant gender gap in all five forms of political participation considered. The deepest gender gap corresponds to the two actions that were undertaken during the most recent election: to persuade others to vote for a party or candidate and to show support for a party or candidate. The odds that a woman has done one of these activities are 29.2%⁸¹ lower than the odds of a man. The gender difference for contacting a politician is equally high. The two lowest gender gaps correspond to the more unconventional forms of political participation, following other studies (Verba, Schlozman et al., 1995). In fact, the odds that a woman participated in a protest or demonstration in the past five years are just 18% lower than the odds that a man did the same thing.

Figure 6.1 presents the gender gap in two political activities during the most recent election campaign, by country. The first activity is trying to persuade other people to vote for a particular party or candidate, while the second one is showing support for a party or candidate by attending a meeting, etc. The figure shows the difference between the percentage of men who did the activity minus the percentage of women. Therefore, positive values indicate that more men than women did the activity while negative values mean the opposite. Accordingly to table 6.1, with a few exceptions, men participated more actively in the most

⁸¹ According to table 6.1, the odds ratio are 0.708. So, $1 - 0.708 = 0.292 \times 100 = 29.2\%$.

recent campaign than women did, and most of those differences are significant (see note 1 under figure 6.1).

Still in figure 6.1, the countries are ordered (left to the right) from the country that has the lowest percentage of women in parliament to the one that has the highest. Since these values refer to campaign related activities, the incoming legislature was considered (see figure 5.1). From figure 6.1, it does not seem that there is a linear relationship between any of the analysed activities and the feminisation of parliaments. With the exception of Albania, there does not seem to be a big difference between the countries that have a low and a high percentage of women in parliament (correlation -0.16 for both activities, excluding outlier Albania). Actually, the highest gender gaps can be found in countries that (at least in this figure) occupy a middle position.

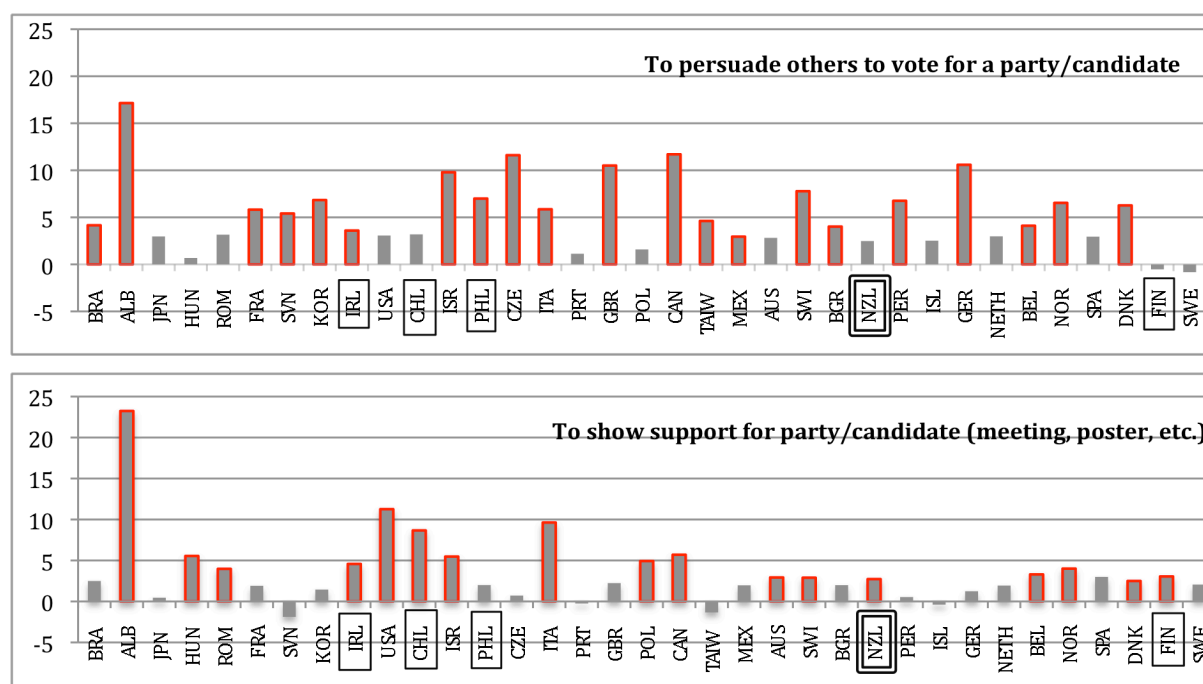


Figure 6.1: Gender gap in two political activities during the most recent election campaign, by country (% men - % women)

* The value for New Zealand in the first graph corresponds to 'discuss politics with others' and not to 'persuade others to vote for a party'. New Zealand was the only country where this question was asked differently.

Note 1: Columns delineated in red indicate that the gender gap is significant.

Note 2: Simple squares identify the presence of a female President and double dashed squares of a female Prime Minister (incoming).

Note 3: Correlations at the aggregate level (n=35): to persuade (- 0.26), to show support (- 0.30). Without the outlier Albania (n=34): to persuade (-0,16), to show support -0,16).

Figure 6.2 shows an overview of the gender gap by country regarding whether or not the citizens were involved in the following three political activities in the past five years:

contacting a politician, taking part in a demonstration and working together with people who share the same concern. Here also the countries are ordered (left to the right) from the country that has the lowest percentage of women in parliament to the one that has the highest but this time, since the activities refer to the past five years, the outgoing government was considered (see figure 5.1).

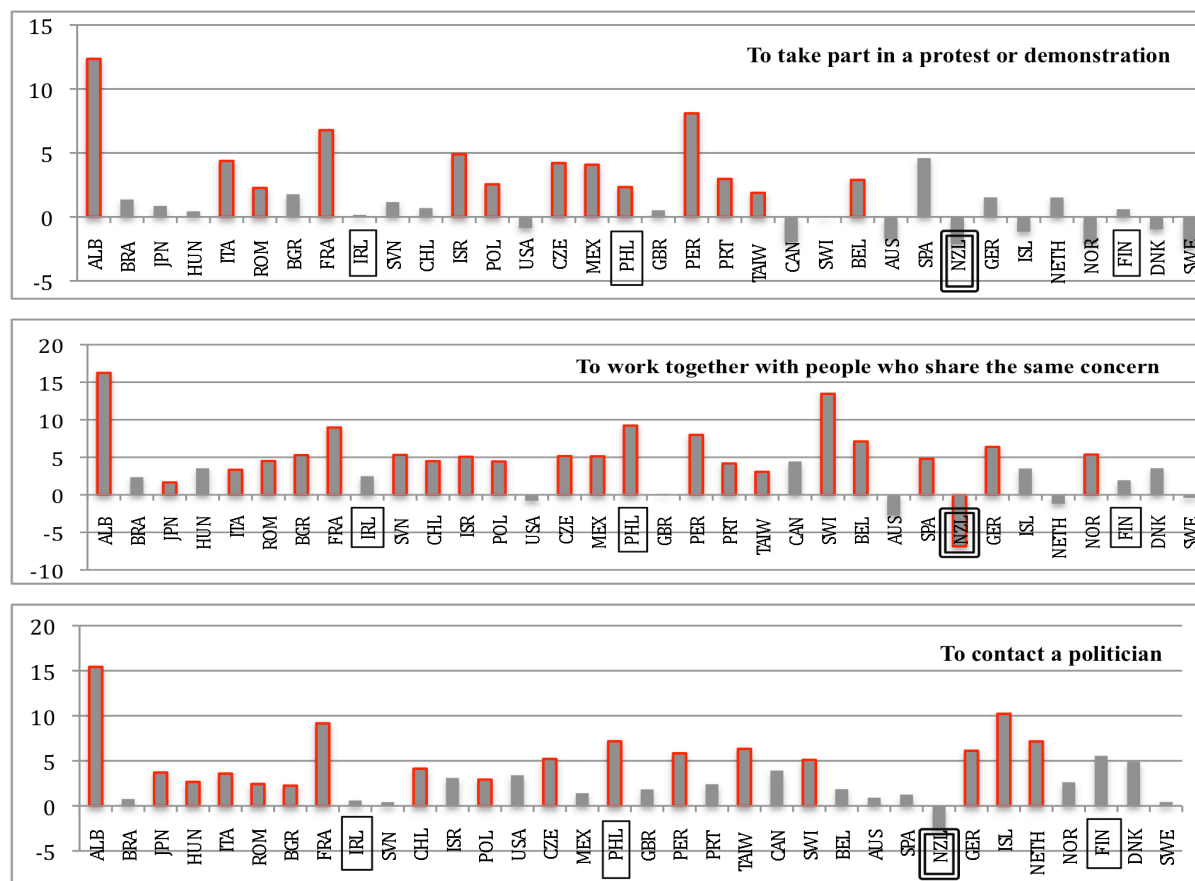


Figure 6.2: Gender gap in three political activities in the past five years, by country (% men - % women)

Note 1: Columns delineated in red indicate that the gender gap is significant.

Note 2: Simple squares identify the presence of a female President and double dashed squares of a female Prime Minister (outgoing).

Note 3: Correlations at the aggregate level ($n=34$)⁸²: to protest (-0.48), to work together (-0.31), to contact politician (-0.03). Without the outlier Albania ($n=33$): to protest (-0.44), to work together (-0.23), to contact politician (0.14).

Two of the three activities considered in figure 6.2 tend to follow a linear relationship with the presence of women in parliament in the outgoing government, namely taking part in a protest, march or demonstration (correlation=-0.44) and working together with people who

⁸² Republic of Korea was excluded from this figure because the number of people that answered to these three questions was strangely low, around 130. It gives the impression that something is wrong with the data.

share the same concern (correlation=-0.23)⁸³. In other words, the gender gap in these two activities is at least slightly bigger and more often significant in countries where women are poorly represented in parliament. Contacting a politician does not seem to be connected to the gender composition of parliament (correlation=-0.14).

In figure 6.1 and 6.2, Presidents are indicated with simple squares, while Prime Ministers with double-dashed squares. With the exception of the Philippines, the gender gap in other countries that also have a female national leader tends to be quite small. From the five activities covered by both figures, Finland presents only one significant gender gap for showing support for a party or candidate, which Finnish men do significantly more than their female peers. Almost the same can be said about Ireland, a country in which the only two significant gender gap can be observed in the case of trying to persuade others to vote for a party or candidate and show support for a party or candidate. The case of New Zealand is even more evident since there is one activity – working together with people who share the same concern – that women from New Zealand have done significantly more than men in the past five years. New Zealand is the only country in the whole dataset that has a significant gender gap in favour of women. It is important to remember not only that New Zealand has had a woman as Prime Minister since 1997, but was also the first country to give the right to vote to women, in 1893. It only makes sense to analyse Chile in figure 6.1, since this figure presents the activities that are likely to have been influenced by the incoming legislature. As mentioned in chapter 5, Michelle Bachelet was elected President of Chile for the first time in the elections covered by the CSES (in 2005, 2006) – being therefore part of the incoming but not outgoing legislature. From the two activities considered (figure 6.1), Chile has a significant gender gap only in one, namely showing support for a party or candidate.

⁸³ These correlations exclude Albania - see note under figure 6.2.

The models

For each dependent variable, two models are run. The first model is a replication of what Karp and Banducci (2008) did. In this sense it uses the same controls and independent variables as they did. The main independent variables are:

- *The percentage of female MPs* (from the incoming government in the case of the campaign activities and from the outgoing government in the three remaining ones⁸⁴)
- *An interaction between percentage of female MPs and gender*

The model also includes some common socio-economic and structural controls:

- *Female*
- *Education* (ordinal, no education (1) to a university degree (8))
- *Age* (discrete)
- Dummy for whether or not *children are present in the household*⁸⁵
- Dummy for being *married or living together* vs. everybody else
- Dummy for whether or not the respondent is *employed either part or full time* vs. everybody else⁸⁶
- *New democracy* (eight countries are new democracies⁸⁷)
- *Simultaneous presidential elections* ‘because concurrent presidential elections may serve to further mobilize the electorate’ (Karp and Banducci, 2008: 112). Four countries have simultaneously legislative and presidential elections⁸⁸.

The second model to be run (named from now on ‘*larger model*’) includes some extra independent variables, namely:

- *Percentage of female ministers* (from the incoming government in the case of the campaign activities and from the outgoing government in the three remaining ones), which was summed up with the percentage of female MPs (and divided by two), due to high level of correlation between both, and between both interacted with gender (as explained in chapter 5).
- Dummy variable for *female Prime Minister* (as mentioned before only New Zealand had a female PM)

⁸⁴ As said before, the distinction between incoming and outgoing government is not a replication of Karp and Banducci, as the authors have used only one measure, not being clear from the paper to exactly which moment it refers.

⁸⁵ It is not totally clear from the paper how the authors constructed this variable.

⁸⁶ It is not totally clear from the paper how the authors constructed this variable.

⁸⁷ Albania, Bulgaria, Brazil, Chile, Czech Republic, Philippines, Poland, Slovenia.

⁸⁸ Brazil, Chile, Philippines, USA.

- Dummy variable for *female President*. This variable includes Chile's President Michelle Bachelet in the case of the campaign activities, but not when the dependent variable is one of the three activities potentially done in the previous five years.
- Interaction between the three new independent variables and gender. These variables are the most important ones for the purpose of this chapter and are also exactly the same as used in the previous chapter (see chapter 5).

The larger model has some extra variables that help to control for contextual factors that are known to be associated with the gender gap in political activity among citizens (for details see table A.5). Three kinds of explanations have been offered to account for the gender gap in certain forms of political participation among citizens. The most common one is the *structural or resource-based* explanations. At the individual level it is mainly education that plays a role, but also other resources such as economic status and free time should not be disregarded (Conway, Steuernagel et al., 1997: 78; Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001). Karp and Banducci's model already included the most important variables accounting for individual level resources, namely education, having children and being employed. At the country level, it has been established that the socio-economic level, and particularly women's socio-economic conditions is a determinant factor (Inglehart and Norris, 2003), even if there are many exceptions (Norris and Inglehart, 2001: 129). Therefore two level 2 variables were added.

- Rate of *female economic activity* (aged 15 and older; %)⁸⁹
- Dummy variable for *Scandinavian countries*

The dummy variable for Scandinavian countries aims to control for the effect of the social-democratic welfare system type, which is likely to have two kinds of impact on the gender gap in political participation. The first one is directly related to resources and it predicts that women's socioeconomic and political resources may benefit from the dual-breadwinner model manifested, for instance, in higher occupational status and more prominent positions in networks (Adman, 2009: 316-17). The second reason is that with such a broad policy reach welfare model 'women are presumed to perceive politics as more meaningful and their political motivation is expected to be strengthened' (Adman, 2009: 316-17).

⁸⁹ Sources (all accessed 19/2/2010): 2001: http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr03_HDI.pdf; 2002: http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr04_HDI1.pdf; 2003: http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR05_HDI1.pdf; 2004: http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2006_Tables.pdf; 2005: http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_20072008_EN_Indicator_tables.pdf.

The latter reason touches upon the second kind of explanation believed to account for the gender gap in political participation among citizens, that is the *cultural factors*, more precisely the predominance of traditional attitudes towards gender roles (Conover, 1988; Wilcox, 1991; Banaszak and Plutzer, 1993; Inglehart and Norris, 2000; Norris and Inglehart, 2001). The year in which women were given the right to vote is a proxy of how traditional a society is, hence that indicator was also included in the larger model.

- *Women's suffrage year*

Finally the third kind of explanation has to do with the impact of *political institutions*. When we talk about political activities among citizens, the most important institutional variable is democratisation. Since Karp and Banducci's model already included a dummy for whether a country is a new democracy or not, there is nothing else to add. More interesting is to think of institutional factors that are known to have an impact on the presence of women in high political positions, but are not likely to explain differences at the citizens' level, namely the kind of electoral system. This factor is one of the most well known as having an impact on women's political representation. There is a consensus among scholars that proportional electoral systems are more advantageous for the election of women (for example, Matland, 2006; Paxton, Hughes et al., 2010; Rule, 1994; Salmond, 2006), even in Sub-Saharan Africa (Yoon, 2004). Contrary to the aforementioned controls, which are not only likely to influence the gender gap in political activity among citizens, but also the presence of women in political power, the kind of electoral system is associated with the main independent variables (but not with the dependent one). In that sense it is a kind of instrumental variable, which confers some exogeneity to the model. Therefore one more variable was added to the model:

- *Disproportionally of the electoral system*, based on the formula developed by Michael Gallagher (1991), ranging from zero to 100 (data collected by Vatter and Bernauer, 2010)⁹⁰.

The inclusion of this variable should also permit the causal mechanism tackled in this chapter to be tested in the 'right' direction. As referred to in the Introduction (chapter 1), there are good reasons to believe that the causal mechanism in question occurs also in the opposite direction. The research question of this chapter is whether or not the presence of more female politicians leads to more political involvement among women. Yet, it is plausible to imagine

⁹⁰ I would like to thank Pedro Magalhães for having suggested this. Afterwards, I decided to use this same variable also for chapter 5, but Pedro's idea was related to this chapter when I presented it at a conference in Lisbon (ICS, November 2010). In chapter 5, the variable is used as a simple control, it does not work so well as an instrument variable since the kind of electoral system is likely to be related to satisfaction with democracy, either positively (Lijphart, 1999) or negatively (Aarts and Thomassen, 2008).

that those countries where the gender gap in political engagement among citizens is already relatively low are also the ones more likely to have a higher presence of female politicians. By including in the model a variable that is clearly correlated with the presence of women in parliament, but not with the gender gap in political engagement among citizens (excluding turnout) – which is the dependent variable of this chapter – we are contributing at least partly to isolating the effect of interest in this chapter.

Finally, as in the case of chapter 5, since the main independent variables correspond to different layers of both the legislative and executive branches of political power, and since their importance depends on the type of political regime, some controls of regime type were added to the model.

- Regime type – for details see table A.1 in the Annexes. Reference category: semi-presidential:
 - *presidential* (1=presidential; 0=otherwise)
 - *parliamentary* (1=parliamentary; 0=otherwise)
 - *other regime type*⁹¹ (1=other; 0=otherwise)

Results

Let us start by looking at the campaign related activities (tables 6.2 and 6.3). The coefficients for the socio-economic controls have the expected sign and significance. Keeping the other variables included in the model constant, men are involved in both activities significantly more than women, and more educated people are more involved than those with less education. Confirming the well known finding that young people tend to vote less (Franklin, 2004), according to these results older people show significantly more support for a party or candidate (table 6.3). Nevertheless, the tendency to try to persuade others to vote for a specific party is apparently more common among younger people, and amongst those who do not have children in the household but are married (table 6.2). The occurrence of a simultaneous presidential election seems indeed to be related to more political involvement (table 6.2 and 6.3).

Confirming what Karp and Banducci (2008) observed, and what figure 6.1 seems to illustrate, there is no sign of relationship between the incoming feminisation of parliament and female citizens' involvement in the election campaign, at least regarding the two activities about which respondents were questioned: talking to others to persuade them to vote

⁹¹ It includes: Assembly-independent (Switzerland) and Prime ministerial (Israel).

for a particular party or candidate (table 6.2) and showing support for a party or candidate (table 6.3)⁹².

The significant gender gap in the larger model for female Prime Minister regarding persuasion (table 6.2) is easily understood, as New Zealand is an extreme outlier. As reported under figure 6.1, in New Zealand that question was asked differently: instead of being asked whether they had tried to persuade others to vote for a certain party or candidate, respondents were asked whether they had discussed politics with others. Considerably more people discuss politics with others than try to convince others of which party to vote for⁹³. There are no significant results for the interactions.

Regarding the larger model for showing support for a party or candidate (table 6.3), there is one positive significant result for the interaction between living in New Zealand and being a woman, and one negative significant result for living there and being a man. Keeping all other variables included in the model constant, women in New Zealand seem to have been significantly more active in showing support for a party or candidate compared to men⁹⁴. As mentioned before, New Zealand was the first country to give women the right to vote, but since that variable is part of the model as a control, it is less likely that this result is due to it.

Concerning level 2 controls, semi-presidential countries seem to be the ones where people persuade others to vote for a party the least (table 6.2). The disproportionality of the electoral system and the rate of female economic activity are associated with more participation in both types of action (table 6.2 and 6.3).

⁹² The same two models were also run using the outgoing gender composition of parliament instead of the incoming one, and excluding Albania (which is a clear outlier – see figure 6.1). The coefficients for the main independent variables remain non significant.

⁹³ In fact, while the percentage of positive answers to that question is 90% among New Zealand's respondents, it is 24% for the whole sample.

⁹⁴ The same two models were run with the outgoing gender composition of parliament and the results were also basically the same.

Table 6.2: Explaining the gender gap in persuading others to vote for a party/candidate during the most recent election campaign

	Persuade others to vote for a party/candidate			
	Karp and Banducci's model		Larger model	
	Coef. (stand. error)	Exp(B)	Coef. (stand. error)	Exp(B)
Female	-0.359**** (0.058)	0.699	-0.372**** (0.058)	0.689
Education	0.126**** (0.008)	1.134	0.123**** (0.008)	1.131
Age	-0.002* (0.001)	0.998	-0.002** (0.001)	0.998
Children in household	-0.093*** (0.029)	0.911	-0.102*** (0.030)	0.903
Married	0.046 (0.029)	1.047	0.032 (0.030)	1.033
Employed (full or part time)	0.073*** (0.028)	1.076	0.073** (0.028)	1.076
New democracy	-0.599 (0.374)	0.549	-0.529** (0.227)	0.589
Concurrent presidential election	0.865* (0.472)	2.376	0.876*** (0.312)	2.402
% female MPs	-0.015 (0.017)	0.985		
% female MPs*female	0.000 (0.002)	1.000		
Presidential regime type			0.630** (0.306)	1.877
Parliamentary regime type			0.635*** (0.228)	1.886
Other regime type			0.795** (0.396)	2.213
Female economic activity			0.045*** (0.014)	1.046
Women suffrage			-0.002 (0.006)	0.998
Dummy for Scandinavia			-0.236 (0.360)	0.790
Disproportionality of electoral system			0.033** (0.014)	1.034
% female MPs+Ministers			-0.017 (0.011)	0.983
Female PM			3.605**** (0.558)	36.768
Female P			0.026 (0.308)	1.026
% female MPs+Ministers *female			0.001 (0.002)	1.001
Female PM*female			-0.018 (0.195)	0.982
Female P*female			0.094 (0.086)	1.099
Constant	-1.407*** (0.496)		-1.326 (11.854)	
N (level 1)	47197		45212	
N (level 2)	33		32	
Log-likelihood	-20927.338		-20056.674	
Level-2 Variance	0.808		0.194	

Standard errors in parentheses; **** p<0.001, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6.3: Explaining the gender gap in showing support for a party/candidate during the most recent election campaign

	Show support for a party/candidate			
	Karp and Banducci's model		Larger model	
	Coef. (stand. error)	Exp(B)	Coef. (stand. error)	Exp(B)
Female	-0.441**** (0.073)	0.643	-0.421**** (0.073)	0.656
Education	0.110**** (0.009)	1.116	0.108**** (0.009)	1.114
Age	0.009**** (0.001)	1.009	0.009**** (0.001)	1.010
Children in household	0.030 (0.037)	1.030	0.026 (0.037)	1.026
Married	-0.013 (0.035)	0.987	-0.014 (0.035)	0.986
Employed (full or part time)	0.052 (0.034)	1.054	0.052 (0.035)	1.053
New democracy	-0.010 (0.275)	0.990	-0.084 (0.271)	0.919
Concurrent presidential election	0.761** (0.346)	2.141	0.575 (0.375)	1.777
% female MPs	-0.020 (0.013)	0.980		
% female MPs*female	0.005 (0.003)	1.005		
Presidential regime type			0.552 (0.368)	1.737
Parliamentary regime type			0.551** (0.273)	1.736
Other regime type			0.389 (0.475)	1.476
Female economic activity			0.039** (0.016)	1.040
Women suffrage			-0.005 (0.007)	0.995
Dummy for Scandinavia			-0.704 (0.432)	0.494
Disproportionality of electoral system			0.034** (0.017)	1.034
% female MPs+Ministers			-0.013 (0.013)	0.987
Female PM			-1.111* (0.661)	0.329
Female P			0.708* (0.367)	2.030
% female MPs+Ministers *female			0.003 (0.003)	1.003
Female PM*female			0.509** (0.216)	1.663
Female P*female			0.005 (0.095)	1.005
Constant	-2.756**** (0.373)		3.827 (14.151)	
N (level 1)	47067		45082	
N (level 2)	33		32	
Log-likelihood	-15171.324		-14644.515	
Level-2 Variance	0.431		0.277	

Standard errors in parentheses; **** p<0.001, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Tables 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 present the results of multilevel logistic regressions for the remaining three activities. Here the results are more interesting regarding the main independent variables than the previous ones. Focusing firstly on the Karp and Banducci model replications, we observe that there is a significant coefficient in the interaction between being a female citizen and the percentage of women in parliament for two of the three analysed activities: taking part in a protest, march or demonstration (table 6.4) and working together with people who share the same concern (table 6.5). The only activity in which a gender gap is not related to the level of feminisation of parliament is whether or not respondents contacted a politician in the past five years (table 6.6)⁹⁵.

Concerning the larger models, there are some more interesting findings. We confirm that the traditional gender gap in participation in protests and demonstrations is lower in countries where there were more women in parliament and ministers in the outgoing government (table 6.4). Regarding working with other people who share the same concern, besides the fact that the interaction between being a woman and the feminisation of parliament (and now also government) remains significant, the interaction between being a woman and living in a country with a female Prime Minister is also significant (table 6.5). I ran the same model excluding the outliers Albania and New Zealand (see figure 6.2), and the results stay practically the same with the difference that not only the interaction between the percentage of female MPs and ministers and gender is significant (as in table 6.5), but also the coefficient for the percentage of female MPs and ministers becomes significant ($p=0.074$) – contrary to table 6.5. This suggests that the relationship between working together with others and the percentage of female MPs and ministers applies not only to women but also to men, although slightly more to women.

Finally, the larger model for contacting a politician adds some new findings (table 6.6). Although the main results of Karp and Banducci's model are confirmed – i.e. that being a woman and the feminisation of parliament and ministries are not connected with contacting a politician – we do see that in countries where a woman is President or Prime Minister, female citizens contacted more politicians in the past five years than in countries where those positions are occupied by men. However, also here I ran the same model excluding the outlier

⁹⁵ Figure 6.2 gives the impression that Albania is an outlier as it has a particularly high gender gap and could therefore be misleading the results. However, I ran the three models without Albania and the results do not change substantially. Furthermore, the same figure presents New Zealand has an outlier, as it has a significant gender gap in the opposite direction for the variable 'work with other who share the same concern'. I ran the same model for that dependent variable without New Zealand and the coefficient for the interaction remains significant.

Albania (see figure 6.2) and the results change considerably. Not only women, but also men are likely to be affected by the presence of a female President since it is no longer the interaction but the coefficient for female President that becomes significant. Furthermore, the percentage of female MPs and ministers also becomes significant, suggesting a relationship between it and contacting a politician. The results for PM remain the same.

Regarding the individual controls, we observe again that political participation is a characteristic of highly educated people, employed and of parents. The latter result is somehow surprising especially since this variable is significant in the other direction for persuading others to vote for a particular party. Age is positively associated with working together with others (table 6.5) and contacting a politician (table 6.6), but negatively associated with participating in protests (table 6.4) – which confirms the thesis of the non-normalisation of the protester (Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2001).

Although not shown⁹⁶, the same three models of tables 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 were run with another independent variable that consists of a triple interaction of female MPs and government with being a woman and age. A significant negative coefficient suggests that young women are more connected to the presence of female MPs and ministers than older ones. A significant coefficient was detected for taking part in protest and demonstrations. Therefore, in countries where there are more women in parliament and government, not only women in general (as that coefficient remains significant), but mainly young women take more part in protests and demonstrations. This variable is the only one for which the coefficient for age is significant and negative, confirming what was said before, i.e. that this kind of political activity is more popular among young people.

⁹⁶ Because there is too much multicollinearity among the variables in those models. The correlation between % female MPs+Ministers*female and the interaction of that variable with age is over 90%.

Table 6.4: Explaining the gender gap in taking part in a protest/demonstration in the past five years

	Take part in a protest/demonstration			
	Karp and Banducci's model		Larger model	
	Coef. (stand. error)	Exp(B)	Coef. (stand. error)	Exp(B)
Female	-0.577**** (0.075)	0.562	-0.625**** (0.077)	0.535
Education	0.192**** (0.010)	1.211	0.194**** (0.010)	1.214
Age	-0.012**** (0.001)	0.988	-0.012**** (0.001)	0.988
Children in household	0.078** (0.038)	1.081	0.071* (0.038)	1.073
Married	-0.193**** (0.038)	0.824	-0.189**** (0.039)	0.827
Employed (full or part time)	0.093** (0.037)	1.097	0.086** (0.037)	1.089
New democracy	-0.301 (0.340)	0.740	0.055 (0.351)	1.057
Concurrent presidential election ⁹⁷	-0.021 (0.398)	0.979		
% female MPs	0.003 (0.015)	1.003		
% female MPs*female	0.017**** (0.003)	1.017		
Presidential regime type			0.345 (0.398)	1.412
Parliamentary regime type			0.191 (0.329)	1.211
Other regime type			1.058* (0.600)	2.879
Female economic activity			-0.025 (0.021)	0.975
Women suffrage			-0.010 (0.009)	0.990
Dummy for Scandinavia			-0.242 (0.568)	0.785
Disproportionality of electoral system			0.044 (0.032)	1.045
% female MPs+Ministers			0.021 (0.020)	1.021
Female PM			-0.640 (0.809)	0.528
Female P			-0.709 (0.456)	0.492
% female MPs+ ministers*female			0.018**** (0.003)	1.018
Female PM*female			0.076 (0.192)	1.079
Female P*female			0.090 (0.131)	1.094
Constant	-2.699**** (0.415)		17.676 (18.094)	
N (level 1)	45837		43856	
N (level 2)	32 ⁹⁸		31	
Log-likelihood	-13143.402		-12893.409	
Level-2 Variance	0.554780965		0.418894376	

Standard errors in parentheses; **** p<0.001, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

⁹⁷ I do not think that including this variable in the model that aims to explain involvement in political activities in the past five years is very logical. Therefore, I kept it in the replication of the model of Karp and Banducci (2008), but I did not include it in the larger models.

⁹⁸ Korea was excluded from the analyses shown on this table because the questions were asked in a different way in this country and the total of valid answers was very small (around 100).

Table 6.5: Explaining the gender gap in working together with others in the past five years

	Work together with others			
	Karp and Banducci's model		Larger model	
	Coef. (stand. error)	Exp(B)	Coef. (stand. error)	Exp(B)
Female	-0.432**** (0.057)	0.649	-0.455**** (0.060)	0.634
Education	0.158**** (0.008)	1.171	0.158**** (0.008)	1.171
Age	0.002** (0.001)	1.002	0.002** (0.001)	1.002
Children in household	0.078*** (0.030)	1.081	0.080*** (0.030)	1.083
Married	-0.024 (0.030)	0.976	-0.027 (0.030)	0.973
Employed (full or part time)	0.259**** (0.029)	1.296	0.259**** (0.029)	1.295
New democracy	-0.085 (0.307)	0.918	0.354 (0.327)	1.425
Concurrent presidential election ⁹⁹	0.858** (0.360)	2.358		
% female MPs	0.013 (0.014)	1.013		
% female MPs*female	0.008**** (0.002)	1.008		
Presidential regime type			0.760** (0.372)	2.139
Parliamentary regime type			0.417 (0.308)	1.517
Other regime type			0.758 (0.564)	2.134
Female economic activity			0.024 (0.019)	1.024
Women suffrage			0.000 (0.009)	1.000
Dummy for Scandinavia			-0.192 (0.533)	0.825
Disproportionality of electoral system			0.009 (0.030)	1.009
% female MPs+Ministers			0.022 (0.018)	1.022
Female PM			-0.416 (0.757)	0.660
Female P			0.437 (0.423)	1.548
% female MPs+ ministers*female			0.007*** (0.002)	1.007
Female PM*female			0.658**** (0.139)	1.931
Female P*female			0.118 (0.079)	1.125
Constant	-2.961**** (0.374)		-5.692 (16.946)	
N (level 1)	45675		43705	
N (level 2)	32		31	
Log-likelihood	-19805.119		-19373.676	
Level-2 Variance	0.459793436		0.372440458	

Standard errors in parentheses; **** p<0.001, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

⁹⁹ I do not think that including this variable in the model that aims to explain involvement in political activities in the past five years is very logical. Therefore, I kept it in the replication of the model of Karp and Banducci (2008), but I did not include it in the larger models.

Table 6.6: Explaining the gender gap in contacting a politician in the past five years

	Contact a politician			
	Karp and Banducci's model		Larger model	
	Coef. (stand. error)	Exp(B)	Coef. (stand. error)	Exp(B)
Female	-0.347**** (0.067)	0.707	-0.371**** (0.072)	0.690
Education	0.200**** (0.009)	1.221	0.196**** (0.009)	1.216
Age	0.013**** (0.001)	1.013	0.013**** (0.001)	1.013
Children in household	0.127**** (0.035)	1.135	0.135**** (0.035)	1.144
Married	0.136**** (0.034)	1.146	0.136**** (0.035)	1.145
Employed (full or part time)	0.202**** (0.034)	1.224	0.201**** (0.034)	1.223
New democracy	-0.516* (0.279)	0.597	-0.511** (0.257)	0.600
Concurrent presidential election ¹⁰⁰	0.514 (0.327)	1.672		
% female MPs	0.011 (0.012)	1.011		
% female MPs*female	0.003 (0.003)	1.003		
Presidential regime type			1.129**** (0.291)	3.091
Parliamentary regime type			0.429* (0.241)	1.535
Other regime type			0.601 (0.441)	1.824
Female economic activity			0.021 (0.015)	1.022
Women suffrage			-0.009 (0.007)	0.991
Dummy for Scandinavia			-0.502 (0.414)	0.605
Disproportionality of electoral system			0.029 (0.023)	1.030
% female MPs+Ministers			0.016 (0.014)	1.016
Female PM			-0.358 (0.588)	0.699
Female P			0.489 (0.330)	1.630
% female MPs+ ministers*female			0.002 (0.003)	1.002
Female PM*female			0.543**** (0.139)	1.720
Female P*female			0.160* (0.086)	1.173
Constant	-3.992**** (0.344)		11.421 (13.231)	
N (level 1)	45864		43891	
N (level 2)	32		31	
Log-likelihood	-16074.823		-15491.547	
Level-2 Variance	0.37470632		0.221355759	

Standard errors in parentheses; **** p<0.001, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

¹⁰⁰ I do not think that including this variable in the model that aims to explain involvement in political activities in the past five years is very logical. Therefore, I kept it in the replication of the model of Karp and Banducci (2008), but I did not include it in the larger models.

The next step was to calculate predicted probabilities¹⁰¹ of the most interesting results found before. Only the activities that were undertaken in the past five years were considered since the others showed only significant results regarding New Zealand. All other variables were kept constant on their most common value (in case of dummy variables) and on their average value¹⁰². The predicted probabilities were calculated based on the larger models and all calculations used only the 31 countries that were included in the analyses (tables 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6). Figure 6.3 presents the predicted probabilities for different levels of feminisation of parliament and government, while figure 6.4 presents the predicted probabilities for cases without a female leader, with a female President and with a female Prime Minister. Participating in protests or demonstration was not included in figure 6.4, since table 6.4 revealed no interesting outcomes concerning dyadic representation and that variable.

¹⁰¹ The predicted values presented in this chapter were calculated using the STATA command *predictnl*.

¹⁰² Averages for education and age were calculated separately for women and men. The values chosen for the dummy variables are the following: married, employed, no children, no Scandinavian country, old democracy, and semi-presidential regime.

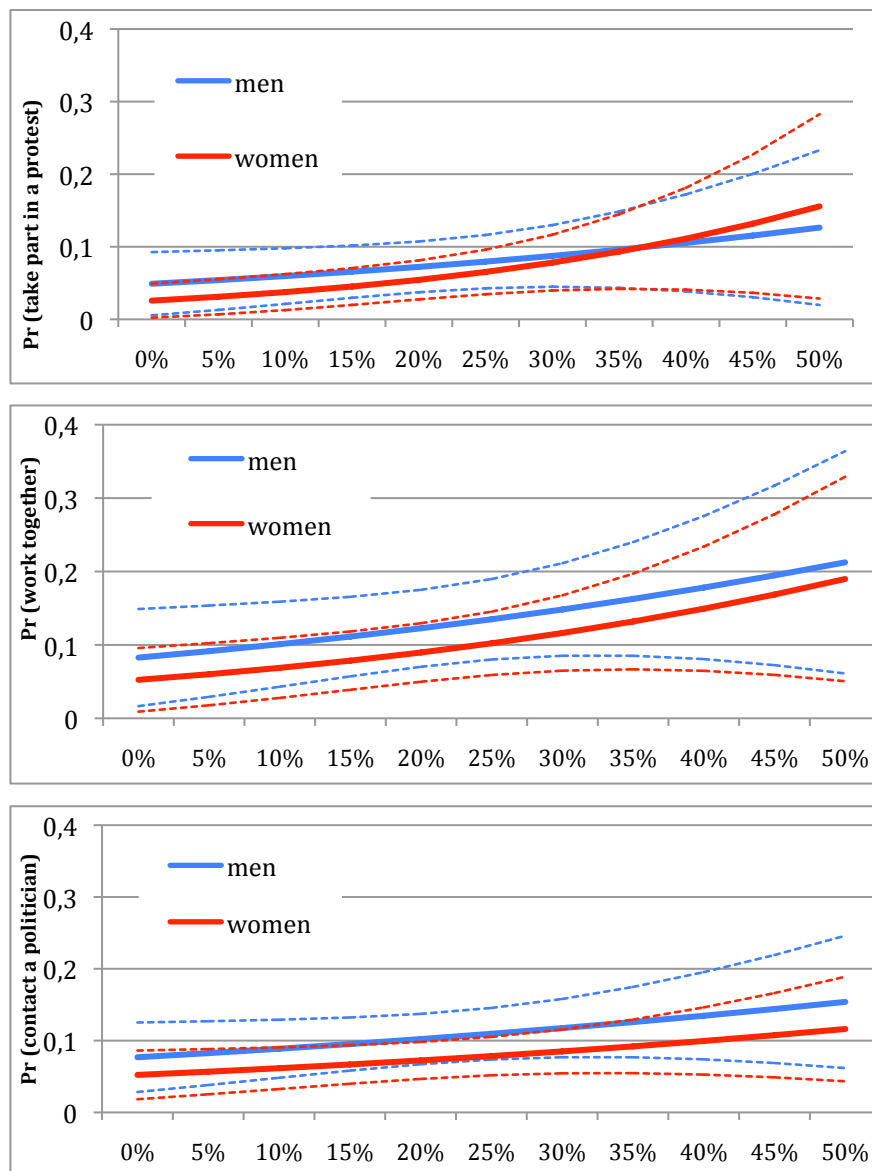


Figure 6.3: Predicted probabilities of having done three political activities in the past five years, by % of female MPs and ministers

Note: Dashed lines indicate the 90% confidence interval.

The results are very small but nonetheless worthy of note. The significant interaction between the percentage of female MPs and ministers and being a woman is visible mainly for participating in a protest or demonstration. In the first graph of figure 6.3, we observe that in countries where the presence of female politicians is practically null, the predicted probability that women participate in protests is lower than that of men; when it reaches 40% both genders have basically the same predicted probability of participating in protests (11%), and when it overcomes 40% women exceed men. If we consider the confidence intervals these differences are almost negligible. The only definite observation that can be made is that in

countries where the percentage of female MPs and ministers is lower than 40%, the predicted probability that women participate in protest is always lower than that of men, while above that threshold, it can even exceed that of male citizens.

Although table 6.5 presented a significant interaction effect also for working together with others who share the same concern, it is important to re-emphasise that running the large model excluding the outliers Albania and New Zealand showed a significant coefficient for the percentage of female MPs and ministers (besides for the interaction). This suggests that the relationship between the feminisation of parliament and government and working together with others applies not only to women but also to men (although slightly more to women). Accordingly, the second graph of figure 6.3 illustrates a slight increase in the predicted probabilities of working together, which is equal for both genders. The women's line rises slightly more than that of men but the difference is too minor to be noted.

A comparable situation can be observed concerning the last graph of figure 6.3. Although according to table 6.6 there is no relationship between the percentage of female MPs and ministers and contacting a politician, the same model excluding the outlier Albania revealed the opposite. The graph, although very slightly, illustrates that relationship, which is supposed to be equal for women and men. Moreover, as mentioned before, the same model without Albania also hints that not only women but also men who live in countries with a female President tend to have contacted a politician in the past five years significantly more often than those who live in countries where the President is a man¹⁰³. Looking at figure 6.4 (fifth graph), we observe signs of that.

The outcomes for New Zealand in figure 6.4 are in accordance with the ones from tables 6.5 and 6.6. In fact, we observe that the predicted probabilities that women work together with others or contact a politician are higher than those of men in New Zealand, while everywhere else the opposite is true – even if the gender differences in New Zealand (considering the confidence intervals) are not very significant. The fact that the predicted probabilities are very often not significant in this chapter is probably due to the lack of level 2 cases (countries) which often leads to committing type II errors, i.e. failing to observe a relationship when it exists in reality.

¹⁰³ Contrary to table 6.6 which shows the interaction but not 'main effect' as significant.

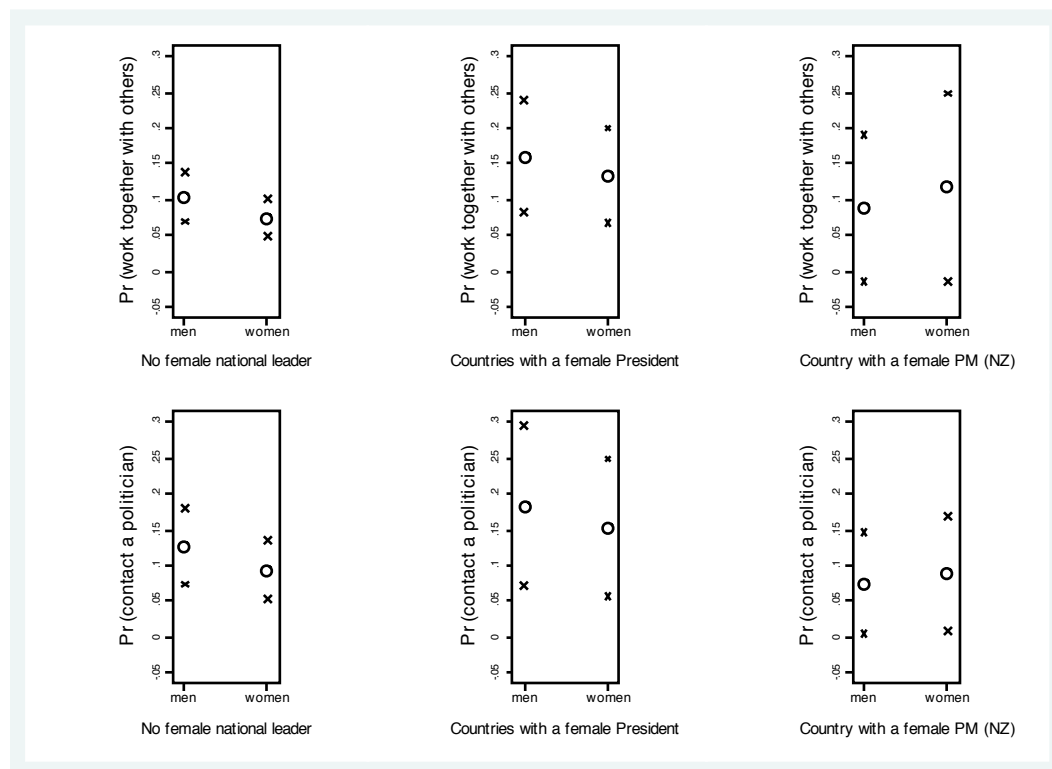


Figure 6.4: Predicted probabilities of having done two political activities in the past five years in a country with no female national leader; with a female President; and with a female Prime Minister

Note 1: The percentage of female MPs and ministers were kept at its average for the 31 countries analysed (21.8%).

Note 2: Dots are predicted values, while the crosses refer to the 90% confidence intervals.

Conclusions

Contrary to the results of previous research that used the same across countries data (Karp and Banducci, 2008), the analysis developed here shows some evidence that the presence of female politicians might be related to women's political involvement, or at least to some forms in which that involvement is expressed. It also suggests however that not all kinds of political participation are related to the presence of women in political power in the same way. In order to reach the goal of this chapter, which is to find out what forms of political participation are more likely to be affected by the presence of female politicians three hypotheses were considered. According to the first one it is the intensity of the gender gap in the forms of political activity that determines what forms are more influenced by the presence of female politicians. If that were the case, then we would have seen the biggest signs of impact among the more conventional forms of participation, which are, according to table 6.1, the ones that have the deepest gender gap. Curiously the third hypothesis ended up predicting the same thing, as it expects female politicians to be mostly influential in the areas where they are visible, which is conventional politics. Finally, the second hypothesis expects the signs of

impact to be stronger within the public forms of political participation (instead of private ones).

The only hypothesis that is clearly confirmed is the second one since the clearest sign of impact are visible for participating in a protest or demonstration, which, I argue, is the most public action from the five forms of political participation analysed. On the other hand, the least sign of impact was found for talking with others in order to persuade them to vote for a particular party or candidate during the most recent election campaign, which is probably the most private one. Aside from this, although persuasion does not imply a big physical effort (compared for example with going to a protest), it does require a relatively high interest in politics associated with a considerable high self-esteem. The person who does it has to believe that he/she knows more about the topic than his/her interlocutor in order to try to convince him/her of something. In other words, it is possible that the motivation or internal conviction needed to persuade someone to vote for a certain party is higher than the one needed to undertake any of the other activities and therefore is less prone to be influenced by external factors. Finally, and related, persuading someone is an individual activity/decision, while the other actions might be organised in small groups of family or friends, and within that small group it is likely that some people just take part because the others insist.

While the first hypothesis is clearly rejected suggesting that the intensity of the gender gap plays no role, the third one has ambiguous results. Three political actions (participation in protests, marches or demonstrations and work together with others who share the same concern) appear to be connected to the presence of women both in parliament and in ministerial positions, while other two are more related to the existence of a female national leader (either President or Prime Minister). These activities are showing support for a party or candidate during the most recent campaign and contacting a politician in the last five years¹⁰⁴. This suggests that the feminisation of parliament and government is more connected with the most unconventional forms of participation, while female national leaders are more associated with conventional forms of politics. One possibility is that the presence of only one female politician produces a more focused impact and therefore is more efficacious as a role model effect, while the feminisation of parliament and ministries creates a more diffused impact that might increase women's interest in politics and therefore bring them to be more politically active in general, but not necessarily in conventional politics.

¹⁰⁴ Contacting a politician in the last five years is also related to the percentage of female MPs and ministers but that relationship is very weak (see third graph of figure 6.3).

The fact that only one country in the sample has a female PM (New Zealand) is obviously a strong limitation, and it makes it impossible to make any conclusion about the impact that the presence of a female PM might have. This is even truer since New Zealand is a very special case, mainly because of the already mentioned very early female suffrage.

Whether the signs of impact are felt only on women or on both women and men also depends on the kind of activity considered. The relationship between working together with others and the feminisation of parliament and government was found to apply to both sexes almost equally. The same can be said about contacting a politician: not only women but also men are more likely to do so in countries where there is a female President. The likelihood that both genders are almost equally influenced was predicted in the theoretical framework, the rationale being that if both women and men are likely to evaluate a gender equilibrated political environment more positively, it is also to be expected that both genders feel more motivated to participate.

The most robust result concerns the relationship between participating in a protest and the percentage of female MPs and ministers. It clearly suggests that in countries where the feminisation of parliament and government is higher, the gender gap in protests is lower. Even if one does not believe in the casual mechanism implicit in the research question of this chapter but rather thinks of it from the other way around (the society influences the political elites), this result is still interesting since this link between conventional and unconventional forms of participation is unexpected.

7 – Case study: Angela Merkel as a potential catalyser of interest in politics among women¹⁰⁵

Introduction

In November 2005, 31.8% of the German *Bundestag* seats were occupied by women. This ensured that the country ranked 15th in the world classification of women in national parliaments¹⁰⁶. However, no woman had ever been the President of the unified Germany and Angela Merkel had just become the first ever female Chancellor. From 2005 to 2009 Merkel led a grand coalition composed of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), its Bavarian sister party Christian Social Union (CSU), and the Social Democratic Party (SPD). After the September 2009 federal elections, Merkel received her second mandate. A better result (compared to the previous elections), allowed the CDU/CSU to form a more probable coalition with the Free Democratic Party (FDP)¹⁰⁷.

This chapter focuses on the impact that the election of Angela Merkel as Chancellor might have provoked on German women's (and men's) interest in politics. As seen in the Theoretical Framework (chapter 3), several factors are likely to play a role on the strength of the impact that female politicians provoke on women's level of political engagement: whether the female politicians run in a competitive and/or visible place (Atkeson, 2003; Campbell and Wolbrecht, 2006, but see Dolan, 2006), their level of popularity, whether they focus on issues of concern to women (Hansen, 1997) or whether the environment of the election or the media focus on it, and if the descriptive representation of women is a salient concern (Koch, 1997). Angela Merkel offers an interesting case for study since she personalizes some paradoxes. On one hand, Merkel does not pay too much attention to gender-related issues and does not try to appeal particularly to women, which could lead to female citizens being indifferent to her. But on the other hand, the simple fact that she is a woman – which was constantly recalled by the media during the 2005 elections (Ferree, 2006: 97) –, the unquestionable importance of her political position¹⁰⁸, and her relatively high popularity (Brettschneider, Neller et al., 2006: 487) could provoke the opposite effect. To a certain extent, exploring the effect of Merkel

¹⁰⁵ I would like to thank the useful comments that I received when I presented an earlier version of this chapter at the Gender and British Politics Group's seminar, Birkbeck College, University of London, in June 2010, in particular to Sarah Childs.

¹⁰⁶ Inter-Parliamentary Union: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif301105.htm> (accessed 1/4/2010).

¹⁰⁷ The SPD was the major loser of those elections, having suffered its heaviest defeat ever at a German Parliament (*Bundestag*) election (Helms, 2010: 3).

¹⁰⁸ For four consecutive years (2006-2009) and again in 2011, she was considered the most influential woman in the world by Forbes Magazine, NY, USA. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forbes_Magazine%27s_List_of_The_World%27s_100_Most_Powerful_Women (accessed 25/8/2011).

allows the comparison between the relevance of two main potential factors: (not) appealing to women *versus* the importance of the political position.

This chapter uses data from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP) from 2000 to 2009¹⁰⁹. The use of this kind of data permits the observation of changes in the level of interest in politics in the same people, and is therefore extremely powerful, and it is also the first time (to my knowledge) that it is used to study the potential impact of female politicians. The only caveat that this kind of data cannot avoid is the endogeneity problem. The citizens who voted for Merkel are likely to be the same ones who increased their interest in politics between 2005 and 2006¹¹⁰, and it is impossible to find out which came first, sympathy for Merkel/CDU or interest in politics.

Angela Merkel's ascension

Angela Merkel's first political position was Vice Spokesperson of the last East German government (1990). She was appointed by the party Democratic Awakening (DA) which she joined after the fall of the wall (Thompson and Lennartz, 2006: 103), more precisely in December 1989 (Reutter, 2005/2006). In unified Germany, as member of the CDU (officially since October 1990), Merkel was placed on the CDU party list in Mecklenburg West-Pomerania, as well as a candidate in a district in the same state¹¹¹. After the 1990 December elections she was elected to a seat in the *Bundestag* (Reutter, 2005/2006: 219). In January 1991, the then-Chancellor Helmut Kohl appointed her as Minister for Women and Youth, and in 1994 as Minister for the Environment, Conservation and Safety of Nuclear Power Plants. In November 1998, she was appointed General Secretary by the new head of the party, Wolfgang Schäuble. In April 2000, as a consequence of Schäuble's resignation (due the CDU financial scandal), Merkel was elected CDU leader. However, she yielded to Edmund Stoiber (CSU leader and Minister President of Bavaria) the place of CDU/CSU Chancellor candidate for the Bundestag 2002 elections due to lack of support amongst both CSU and CDU members (Wiliarty, 2010: 175). She was given that privilege in the 2005 elections, which eventually led to her becoming Chancellor of Germany.

¹⁰⁹ The data used in this chapter was made available to me by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin).

¹¹⁰ The data does not allow testing for this with precision because respondents were not asked which party they voted for. They were however asked whether they voted and whether they support a political party and if yes, which.

¹¹¹ She is originally from Brandenburg, but since the CDU was very weak there, they decided to nominate her in another state (Clemens, 2006: 61).

There are two main chains of strands explaining Merkel's ascension. One emphasises the circumstance or chance factor, while the other focuses more on Merkel's own merit. Many authors consider that Merkel's ascension was provoked by a combination of both. For example, Mark Thompson and Ludmilla Lennartz (2006) characterize Merkel's ascension as improbable, accidental and unexpected (p.108). They emphasise her apolitical youth and early adulthood (p. 100), the fact that she was reserved and unassuming as a young person (p. 102), how other East German women (such as Bergmann-Pohl) had better prospects of being appointed to be Kohl's Minister for Women and Youth but then were not due to external reasons (p. 104), how gender stereotypes of women as 'cleaner' helped Merkel to become leader after the CDU financial scandal (p. 106), to give some examples. Nevertheless, they also corroborate that Merkel's success had much to do with successful political learning (p. 108).

Sarah Elise Wiliarty (2008) attributes Merkel's ascension mainly to the CDU's internal dynamics and Merkel's leadership technique. According to Wiliarty (2008) Merkel's rise to party chair is more self-orchestrated than argued by the previous authors (p. 83). Furthermore, she states that because of its internal structure, the CDU is particularly open to the advancement of internal minorities, especially people who fulfill more than one quota. Being a female Protestant and from former East Germany Merkel fulfilled three quotas (p. 83, 84). The fact that her style of leadership is characterized by balancing groups' interests is particular suited for a party like the CDU, characterized by strong internal groups that are often in conflict with each other (p. 85).

Clay Clemens (2006) corroborates the circumstantial argument, but states that Merkel was uniquely able to convert the circumstances into opportunities '(...) because she embodied something new, lacked compunction about breaking with tradition, proved open to new ideas and was not too closely linked with or dependent upon any of the CDU's traditional power centers' (Clemens, 2006: 70). Some say that 'her placid exterior hides her infighting skills' (Thompson and Lennartz, 2006: 109) and that is maybe the reason why she has been underestimated throughout her political life (Thompson and Lennartz, 2006: 105). Furthermore, she is described as a quick learner (who rarely repeats a mistake), very rational and pragmatic with a good degree of analytically objectivity (Clemens, 2006: 49). Her will for power is also well known (Clemens, 2006: 50; Reutter, 2005/2006: 215).

However, she is not considered a very charismatic politician (Reutter, 2005/2006: 218) and her speeches are described as dry and without colour or hit (Clemens, 2006: 53).

Compared to Schröder, viewers of televised encounters found her less likeable and less self-confident (Clemens, 2006: 53).

Merkel as a gender political actor?

Some argue that Angela Merkel's 'rise to power has been at least partially *because* of her gender, and not in spite of it' (Wiliarty, 2008: 93), yet she does not want to be categorized as a female politician and during the 2005 campaign she stressed that her sex should not be politically relevant (Clemens, 2006: 48). Furthermore, she claims not to be feminist (Wiliarty, 2008: 93), as Minister of Women, '(...) aside from some measures on behalf of working mothers, [she] did not pursue a feminist agenda there' (Clemens, 2006: 48), and is not regarded as strong advocate of women's politics (McKay, 2004: 70).

However, she seems to have slightly changed throughout time regarding some of her gender-related positions, such as women's quotas with which she did not agree in the beginning of her term, but now does (Clemens, 2006: 48). Also, although Merkel never puts progressive themes at the center of her program or pushes them too far, she is portrayed as liberal regarding cultural issues. Therefore she advocates respect for individual choice, including in issues concerning abortion and homosexuality (Clemens, 2006: 57). She might also have understood the potential of her gender, as '(...) she began stressing her earlier ministerial experience and [started to] appear at some rallies for women voters' (Clemens, 2006: 48). Furthermore, she has brought some women to power, as her closest and most trusted advisors within the party are women¹¹² (Ferree, 2006: 103, 104).

Angela Merkel does not fit into any familiar category of CDU women due to her religion (protestant instead of catholic) and personal life (Clemens, 2006: 48). She is divorced, remarried after many years of cohabitation and has no children. Nevertheless, 'members of the Women's Union (FU) identify with her and acknowledge Merkel's efforts to modernize the CDU's image on gender issues' (Clemens, 2006: 62).

In summary, we could say that although Merkel does not give particular importance to her gender or to gender related issues, 'she is clearly not allergic to contact with feminism or incapable of trusting and promoting other women around her' (Ferree, 2006: 104).

¹¹² For example: Beate Baumann, Eva Christiansen, Annette Schavan, and Hildegard Müller (until 2008).

Merkel and the 2005 Election Results

The 2005 elections were considered by a majority of the Germans to be particularly important (Helms, 2007: 224)¹¹³. However, the turnout was lower than in the previous elections; it went from 79,1% (2002) to 77,7% (2005).

Using data from the German Representative Electoral Statistics¹¹⁴, Eckhard Jesse (2006) did a detailed analysis of the 2005 elections results. The data suggest that the pattern of turnout by gender did not change between 2002 and 2005 (see table 7.1). While men decreased their level of turnout by 1,4%, women decreased it by 1,3% (Jesse, 2006: 516). The same is true if we consider the different age groups separately (Jesse, 2006: 516). So we do not observe that the presence of a female candidate particularly motivated women to vote. However, Merkel might have motivated more eastern Germans to vote because while in West Germany the turnout decreased 2,1%, it increased 1,7% in the East (Jesse, 2006: 521)¹¹⁵.

Table 7.1: Turnout in the 2002 and 2005 *Bundestag* elections by gender (Representative Electoral Statistics)

	Women	Men	Total
2002	79,4%	79,9%	79,6%
2005	78,5%	78,1%	78,3%

Source: Jesse, 2006: 516. For 2002 I did my own calculation based on Jesse (2006) data. These turnout numbers are slightly higher than the official ones.

Concerning voting choice the situation is slightly different. Some authors (for example Clemens, 2006: 70) emphasise that Merkel's CDU won fewer female voters than it had under Stoiber in 2002. Yet, it is important to note that compared to the 2002 elections, all parties except the FDP and the Left party/PDS lost votes and seats (Helms, 2007: 225). It is hence expectable that fewer women voted for the CDU in 2005 than in 2002. A more careful analysis however shows that the losses among men were 2,1% greater than among women (see table 7.2). Furthermore, while in 2002, 1,4% more men than women voted for the CDU, this result was reversed in 2005 (Jesse, 2006: 517), where 0,7% more women than men voted

¹¹³ In this passage, Helms quotes the work of Köcher, R., 2005a 'Will die SPD der Union die Hand zu Reformen reichen?', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 (19 October).

¹¹⁴ In German is called *Repräsentative Wahlstatistik*. More information on this data can be found here (in German only): <http://www.destatis.de/jetspeed/portal/cms/Sites/destatis/Internet/DE/Content/Publikationen/Querschnittsveroeffentlichungen/WirtschaftStatistik/Wahlen/Waehlverhalten.property=file.pdf> (accessed 7/4/2010).

¹¹⁵ The referred article did not have information on the turnout between 2002 and 2005 in East and West Germany by gender, so it remains unclear whether the increase was mainly among female or male Eastern Germans.

for the CDU. So, ‘although Merkel as a female candidate did not try to reach female citizens more than male citizens, she somehow contributed in women overcoming the reservation that prevented them from voting for the CDU/CSU leaded by Stoiber in 2002’¹¹⁶ (Hilmer and Müller-Hilmer, 2006: 212). Regarding the SPD, the pattern is precisely the opposite: between 2002 and 2005 there were more losses among women.

Table 7.2: Voting choice of men and women in the 2005 *Bundestag* elections (% and differences comparing to 2002)

Party	Women	Men	Total
CDU/CSU	35,5 (-2,3)	34,8 (-4,4)	35,2 (-3,3)
SPD	35,5 (-4,7)	32,8 (-3,9)	34,2 (-4,3)
FDP	9,0 (+2,3)	10,7 (+2,6)	9,8 (+2,4)
Linke.PDS	7,6 (+3,9)	9,9 (+5,6)	8,7 (+4,7)
B90/Greens	8,8 (-0,1)	7,4 (-0,8)	8,1 (-0,5)
Other parties	3,5 (+0,8)	4,4 (+0,9)	4,0 (+0,9)

Source: Table entirely copied from Jesse, 2006: 517.

In terms of popularity of the candidates, Angela Merkel was more popular among Christian Democrat identifiers than Edmund Stoiber and Helmut Kohl had been in 2002 and 1998, respectively (Brettschneider, Neller et al., 2006: 487). Furthermore, she was as unpopular among Social Democrats, as Schröder was among CDU sympathisers (Brettschneider, Neller et al., 2006: 486). Also, while Schröder was more popular than Merkel among voters without partisan attachments, they were more supportive of Merkel than they had been of Stoiber three years earlier (Brettschneider, Neller et al., 2006: 487). ‘In the end, differences in popularity were much smaller between Schröder and Merkel than between Schröder and Stoiber [2002] or Schröder and Kohl [1998]’ (Brettschneider, Neller et al., 2006: 487).

‘Nevertheless, opinion poll data reveal that – contrary to the ‘personalization’ thesis – only 19% of the electorate considered the Chancellor question more important than the party composition of the government, compared to 72% of the opposite view (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, 2005: 45)’ (Helms, 2007: 225). The same idea is corroborated by Brettschneider, Neller et al. who observe that party identification was by far the most important determinant of voting behaviour in East and West Germany (2006: 489). Furthermore, German voters do

¹¹⁶ Free translation from the following sentence: ‘Merkel hat zwar als weibliche Kandidatin Frauen nicht stärker angesprochen als Männer, ihr ist es aber offenbar gelungen, Vorbehalte abzubauen, die viele weibliche Wähler 2002 abhielten, die von Stoiber geführte Union zu wählen’.

not seem to consider personal characteristics of the candidate important when they imagine the ideal Chancellor (Brettschneider, Neller et al., 2006: 491). All these factors give strength to the hypothesis that Merkel's gender was not an important issue.

Methods and data

As stated before, this chapter uses data from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP) from 2000 to 2009. The SOEP constitutes a representative longitudinal study of private households, and it comprises annual surveys. It started in 1984¹¹⁷ and it included in that year 5921 households (and 12 245 persons) from the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Throughout the years, new samples were done to compensate for the loss of individuals (and households). While some samples were done with the goal of covering particularly underrepresented groups (such as high income families in 2002 for example), two of them were general and aimed to be representative of the general population of private households in Germany. One of these was done in 1998 and included 1056 households (sample E: Refreshment) and the second one was done in 2000 and included 6052 households (sample F: Innovation). Since the latter includes many more households and started only two years after the former, I decided to concentrate exclusively on the latter. So the data here analysed corresponded to 6 052 households (10 890 persons) in 2000. Since many respondents and households dropped out throughout the years (as in any panel survey), while some others joined the survey¹¹⁸, the total number of people and households interviewed between 2000 and 2009 varies every year.

After some descriptive analysis, results of a difference in difference multilevel model are presented.

Descriptive analysis

The dependent variable is *level of interest in politics* measured in four categories, which go from 1 'not interested at all' to 4 'very interested'. Figure 7.1 represents the percentage of people who felt interested or very interested in politics at the time the questionnaires were applied, by gender between 2000 and 2009.

¹¹⁷ Information taken from SOEP's website: http://www.diw.de/en/diw_02.c.221178.en/about_soep.html (accessed 18/3/2010).

¹¹⁸ This happens for several reasons. 'They enter, for example, when SOEP households split (i.e., individuals move out and form their own households), when people move into SOEP households, and when an original sample member gives birth to a "new sample member"' (Kroh, 2010).

We observe without surprise that women are significantly less interested in politics than men in all waves, even if the gender gap has slightly decreased (see notes under figure 7.1). The trends for both genders are, however, very similar. There are two moments in which the level of interest among citizens residing in Germany increased, namely in 2003 and in 2006. The 2003 interviews were done between January and September, but 78,4% of them were done between January and March. In the 2006 wave, the interviews were done between January and October, but 81,4% of them were done between February and April. Both waves were preceded by a *Bundestag* election in September that took place on the 22nd September 2002 and on the 18th September 2005, respectively. It seems clear that both peaks are the consequence of recent elections. Apparently nothing distinguishes the 2003 peak from the 2006 one.

Most important for the purpose of this chapter, there is no evidence of a particular increase in women's level of interest in politics since Merkel was elected. From here we can conclude that if Merkel had any impact on women's interest in politics, it was certainly not on all women. We will therefore from now on do a more detailed analysis which considers women as a heterogeneous group. Let us start by analysing closeness to a political party.

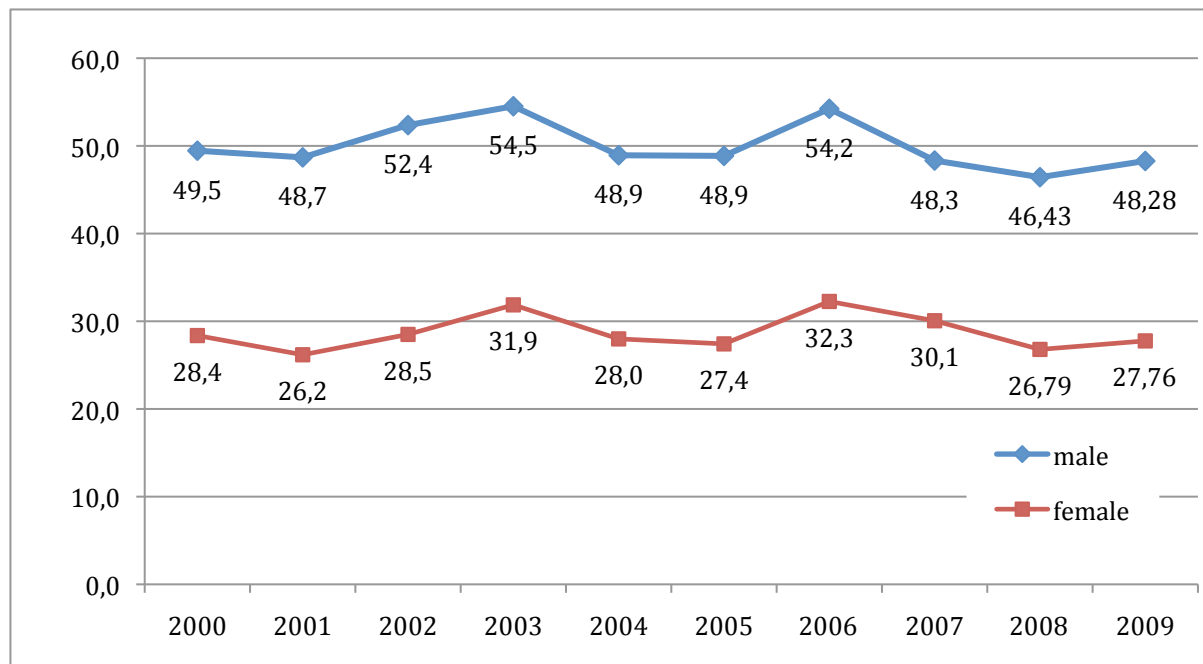


Figure 7.1: Percentage of people who feel interested and very interested in politics, by gender, throughout the years 2000-2009

Note: Chi-square tests were performed to measure gender gap for each year:

2000: Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 526.4964$; $Pr = 0.000$; $n = 10437$
 2001: Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 506.4889$; $Pr = 0.000$; $n = 8763$
 2002: Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 532.4545$; $Pr = 0.000$; $n = 8129$
 2003: Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 440.8795$; $Pr = 0.000$; $n = 7724$
 2004: Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 374.4696$; $Pr = 0.000$; $n = 7461$
 2005: Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 376.9916$; $Pr = 0.000$; $n = 7099$
 2006: Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 344.2945$; $Pr = 0.000$; $n = 6639$
 2007: Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 255.5978$; $Pr = 0.000$; $n = 6296$
 2008: Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 264.4885$; $Pr = 0.000$; $n = 5995$
 2009: Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 268.3981$; $Pr = 0.000$; $n = 5567$

There is a very clear distinction between 2003 and 2006 regarding the gender difference in support for the CDU (see figure 7.2). While between 2002 and 2003, men and women trailed exactly the same trend; between 2005 and 2006 both genders followed a significantly different tendency. In 2005, the percentage of women supporting the CDU was slightly smaller than the percentage of men (even if that difference is not significant – see notes under figure 7.2) and in 2006 these values totally swapped and reached a statistically significant difference. The year 2006 is the only time (for the analysed period) in which a significant gender gap in the support for CDU is observed. Even if it is impossible to prove that this gender gap is due to Angela Merkel's election, it seems to make sense to guess that a combination between the gender and the party of the new Chancellor might have played an important role. These results confirm what was mentioned before regarding the voting choices of women and men in the 2005 elections (see table 7.2).

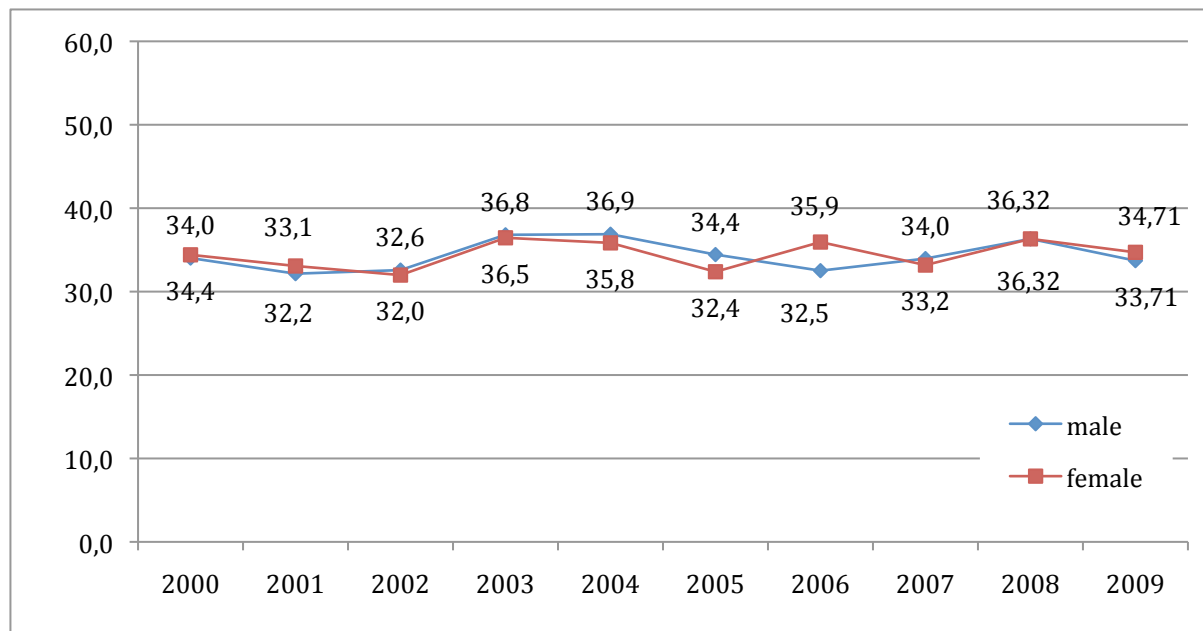


Figure 7.2: Percentage of people who feel close to the CDU, by gender, throughout the years 2000-2009

Note: Chi-square tests were performed to measure gender gap for each year:

2000: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = \text{n.s.}$; $n = 4898$

2001: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = \text{n.s.}$; $n = 3918$

2002: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = \text{n.s.}$; $n = 3660$

2003: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = \text{n.s.}$; $n = 3797$

2004: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = \text{n.s.}$; $n = 3175$

2005: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = \text{n.s.}$; $n = 3196$

2006: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = 4.2537$; $Pr = 0.039$; $n = 3264$

2007: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = \text{n.s.}$; $n = 2793$

2008: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = \text{n.s.}$; $n = 2699$

2009: Pearson $\chi^2(1) = \text{n.s.}$; $n = 2416$

Throughout this chapter, when the CDU is mentioned it does not include the CSU (CDU coalition party). Not considering both parties together is justified for two reasons. Firstly, Angela Merkel is originally (since 1998) the CDU leader and only in 2005 did she become the leader of the CDU/CSU. Secondly, both parties have some clear differences. The CSU is considerably more conservative than the CDU in ideological terms (McKay, 2004: 71) and less progressive regarding women, for example the CSU does not operate any kind of women's quota (McKay, 2004: 71).

Finding out that more women than men tended to feel closer to the CDU in 2006 raises the hypothesis that at least among CDU women the level of interest in politics increased due to Merkel's election. In order to further explore this issue, a new dependent variable was created which consists of the difference in the level of interest in politics observed in 2005 and in 2006 by individual. The new dependent variable goes from -3 (when a person answered 4 in 2005 and 1 in 2006) to 3 (when a person answered 1 in 2005 and 4 in 2006). The creation of this variable implies the assumption that the distance between all

categories is the same, i.e. that the distance between 1 and 2 is the same as between 2 and 3, and so on.

Table 7.3 presents the percentages of women and men according to whether they increased their level of interest in politics (i.e. if the values go from 1 to 3 in the new dependent variable), decreased it (values from -3 to -1) or did not change it (value zero), by political party to which they feel closest to.

Considering men and women together (total column of table 7.3), those who did not identify with any party increased their interest in politics between 2005 and 2006 significantly less than those who identified either with the SPD or to the CDU (see note under table 7.3). There are no other significant differences between the political groups.

Considering men and women separately (second and third columns of table 7.3), we observe that there is no significant gender gap except for two groups, those who felt close to the CDU and those who felt close to another party, both with women having a significantly higher mean. Regarding the latter, the difference is mainly caused by a higher percentage of men than women who decreased their level of interest in politics between both periods (13% vs 9%), while more women than men did not change their levels of interest (69% vs 66%). Regarding those who felt close to the CDU, we observe both a higher percentage of women who increased their interest in politics (25% vs 22%) and a higher percentage of men who decreased their interest in politics (15% vs 10%). This result suggests (though does not prove) that the election of Angela Merkel as Chancellor had a positive impact on the interest in politics not of all women, but of Christian Democrat women.

Table 7.3: Differences in level of interest in politics between 2005 and 2006, by gender and by political party to which one felt closest to (%)

	Women	Men	Total
Respondents who feel close to the CDU and coalitions ¹¹⁹			
Decreased	9.80	14.96	12.30
Did not change	65.06	63.26	64.19
Increased	25.13	21.78	23.51
Average (-3 to 3)	.17	.09	.13
N	561	528	1,089
ttest between women and men = -2.2005; Pr(T < t) = 0.0140			
Respondents who feel close to the SPD and coalitions			
Decreased	9.80	10.18	9.99
Did not change	68.58	65.28	66.92
Increased	21.62	24.54	23.09
Average (-3 to 3)	.14	.16	.15
N	592	599	1,191
ttest between women and men = n.s.			
Respondents who feel close to another party (different from the mentioned two)			
Decreased	8.93	13.36	11.37
Did not change	69.23	66.4	67.67
Increased	21.84	20.24	20.96
Average (-3 to 3)	.15	.08	.11
N	403	494	897
ttest between women and men = -1.6371; Pr(T < t) = 0.0510			
Respondents who do not feel close to any party			
Decreased	13.15	15.47	14.17
Did not change	66.52	63.17	65.04
Increased	20.33	21.36	20.79
Average (-3 to 3)	.07	.05	.06
N	1,795	1,409	3,204
ttest between women and men = n.s.			

Note: A Oneway anova test was performed to measure the differences between political parties. Men and women were considered together. $F=6.57$; $\text{Prob} > F = 0.0002$. Scheffe showed significant differences between those who do not feel close to any party and both the SPD and CDU.

¹¹⁹ But it does not include those who said that they feel close to the CSU, only those who said clearly that they identify with a coalition such as CDU+CSU or CDU+Republicans and so on. An analysis of those who identify with the CSU only was also performed and the results are very different from ones found for CDU sympathisers, since among the former there is no difference between women's and men's change in the level of interest in politics.

Besides party preference, another indicator that is likely to help with understanding women as a heterogeneous group is age. It is well established that voting is a habit that is learnt (or not) while people are relatively young (Plutzer, 2002; Franklin, 2004). In the case that the habit is not learnt at a young age – as is the case with women who were socialised in a time in which women did not yet have the right to vote, for example – the odds are that they will never totally get into the habit of voting. That is likely to have been one of the reasons for the gender gap that used to be observed in levels of turnout. More recently, it has been unanimously observed that that gender gap stopped existing. A very likely reason for the disappearing of the differences between women and men concerning turnout is ‘(...) the replacement of older women with women socialised after receiving the right to vote’ (Franklin, 2004: 124). Although here I am not directly interested in voting, it is reasonable to imagine that young people are more open to be influenced from outside, since they are still defining their own relationship with politics.

In order to analyse whether or not age is really important, five cohorts were considered. In 2005, those who were included in the first cohort were between 17 and 30 years old; second: 31 and 40; third: 41 and 50; fourth: 51 and 65 and the fifth were 66 years olds or older¹²⁰. Table 7.4 presents the average position concerning the difference in the level of political interest between 2005 and 2006¹²¹, by gender and by cohort. It is visible that older cohorts have averages very close to zero, demonstrating that they did not change their level of interest between 2005 and 2006. On the contrary, that of the younger cohorts increased considerably more; the younger the cohort, the bigger the size of the increase. That is particularly true in the case of women. In fact, in the two youngest cohorts, the difference between women and men is significant, with women increasing their level of interest in politics significantly more than men.

¹²⁰ Thinking of years of birth, the fifth cohort includes those who were born before 1939; the fourth between 1940 and 1954; the third 1955 and 1964; the second 1965 and 1974 and the first between 1975 and 1991. I decided to use variable ‘cohort’ here (instead of age) because I do a cohort analysis later (figure 8.4) and using that variable already here makes the whole analysis more coherent. However, I repeated the model having the variable ‘age’ instead of ‘cohort’ and the results are practically the same.

¹²¹ As mentioned before, this variable ranges from –3 to 3.

Table 7.4: Differences in level of interest in politics between 2005 and 2006, by gender and by cohort (average)

	Women	Men	Total
Cohort 1 (17–30 years old)	.21	.14	.18
ttest between women and men = -1.7413; Pr(T < t) = 0.0410			
Cohort 2 (31 – 40)	.15	.10	.13
ttest between women and men = -1.3512; Pr(T < t) = 0.0885			
Cohort 3 (41 – 50)	.13	.12	.13
ttest between women and men = -0.3738; Pr(T < t) = n.s.			
Cohort 4 (51 – 65)	.07	.08	.08
ttest between women and men = 0.3906; Pr(T < t) = n.s.			
Cohort 5 (66 or older)	.02	-.00	.01
ttest between women and men = -0.5328; Pr(T < t) = n.s.			
N	3386	3051	6437

Note 1: The dependent variable differences in level of interest in politics between 2005 and 2006 runs from -3 to 3.

Note 2: The cohorts' age groupings shown here correspond to the year of 2005. For instance, those included in the first cohort were between 17 and 30 years old in 2005.

The next step is to run a multilevel model having the same variable (difference in interest in politics) as dependent variable in order to confirm the previous results for party preference and age cohorts.

Main analysis

The model

The dependent variable *differences in level of interest in politics between 2005 and 2006* (see table 7.3) has seven categories and can therefore be treated as continuous. A random-intercept model is the most adequate technique because the individuals that compose this sample are nested within households, and therefore the assumption (necessary to run a OLS) that the observations of the dependent variable are independent from each other is not met. A null-model was run (see first column of table 7.5) and gave more evidence that a multilevel model was necessary. While the intra-class correlation (ICC), i.e. the within-cluster correlation (or between-cluster heterogeneity) is quite low (0.10), the Likelihood test, which tests the null hypothesis that there is no random intercept in the model is clearly rejected ($p=0.0000$).

The goal of this analysis is to find out who the people that changed their level of interest in politics between 2005 and 2006 are. The dataset does not include many variables that could be used as controls. However, since panel data are used, i.e. the people interviewed

in 2005 are the same as those who were interviewed in 2006, not many controls are necessary. Crucially, this analysis does not aim to explain who the people that are more or less interested in politics are. That would imply a much more exhaustive model, which is impossible to build with the available variables. Also, it is important to emphasise that the level of interest in politics in 2005 does not enter the model as an independent variable because that would be mathematically wrong, as it was used to build the dependent variable. This means that the model does not control for the previous level of interest in politics, which is not a problem, since that control is built into the dependent variable.

The following variables were included in two successive models. Model 1 is composed of the socio-economic and political variables, while model 2 and 3 add up the interactions. Among the former, there are: *female*, number of *years of education* and *cohort*. Both *female* and *years of education* were measured in 2005. However, those people for whom these variables were missing in 2005, the values observed in 2006 were inserted¹²² in order to avoid losing cases. While *female* is a dummy; *years of education* is a continuous variable which goes from 7 to 18 years. As mentioned before *cohort* is composed of five categories (see table 7.4 for details).

The political variables referred to the political parties with which the respondents identified most with in 2006. It is important to control for party support as it is plausible that people who felt closer to the winning party (CDU) increased their interest in politics more as a result of the elections than others. It is also important to confirm whether or not those who identified with a party increased their level of interest in politics more than those who do not identify with any party – as table 7.3 proposed. The reference category is SPD.

Model 2 add up the interactions between all political parties and gender. These interactions are indispensable to check whether or not there is something unique about the women who identified with the CDU, as the descriptive results seem to suggest (see table 7.3). Model 3 includes also an interaction between cohort and gender that allows confirmation of the results of table 7.4.

As we observed in figure 7.1, in 2003 there is a peak of interest in politics that is due to the 2002 election. In order to test whether or not the dynamics under the 2003 peak are different from the ones in 2006, the exact same model was ran for the years 2002 and 2003

¹²² Among respondents who were studying between 2005 and 2006, the number of years of education in 2005 and 2006 is obviously different. However, since we are talking about a one-year difference only, I decided that it does not make much difference and is better than losing cases.

(see table B.1 in the Annexes). When reporting the results for the main model (2005-2006, table 7.5), references are done for the 2002-2003 model (table B.1 in the Annexes).

Results

In figure 7.1 we had seen that there was no gender difference in the variation of interest in politics between 2005 and 2006. In table 7.5 (model 1), however we observe that after controlling for education, age and party preference, women increased their interest in politics between one year and the other significantly more than men. As that was also the case in the model that measures the differences in interest in politics between 2002 and 2003 (see model 1 of table B.1 in the Annexes), we cannot attribute that gender distinction to Merkel. Instead it is a curious result in itself and should be tested in other German (and elsewhere) elections in order to understand if it is robust¹²³.

‘Years of education’ does not seem to play any role here, while age does and is worthy of note. We know that levels of abstention are higher among young people (Franklin, 2004) and also in this dataset older cohorts show higher levels of interest in politics than younger ones. Nevertheless, when it comes to differences between the year before and the year after an election, it seems that young people increase their level of interest in politics more than their older peers¹²⁴. Since once again this is the case both in the 2005-2006 model (table 7.5), as in the 2002-2003 one (table B.1 in the Annexes), this result cannot be attributed to the election of Merkel.

The parties to which one feels closest to in 2006 reveal that the CDU sympathisers or members do not increase or decrease their interest in politics more or less than the SPD sympathisers (reference category). As the same is true for those who feel close to other parties (besides SPD and CDU), it implies that all people who feel close to a political party (irrespective of the party) follow more or less the same pattern of interest in politics between 2005 and 2006. The only significant difference can be found between those who do not feel close to any political party and SPD sympathisers (reference category). So we can say that those who feel close to a political party increase significantly more their interest in politics between both time points than those who do not. Also this result equals the one found for the model 2002-2003.

¹²³ This outcome could also be partially the consequence of an artifact. Since women feel significantly less interested in politics than men, technically (since the scale has a limit) their level of interest can increase more than that of men – whose level of interest was already higher.

¹²⁴ Contrary to gender differences (figure 7.1), regarding age differences, even the descriptive statistics (not shown) demonstrate that young cohorts increase their level of interest more than older ones.

Table 7.5: Explaining the differences in level of interest in politics between 2005 and 2006

	Null-model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Female		.032* (.016)	-.024 (.036)	.059 (0.053)
Years of education		-.005 (.003)	-.005 (.003)	-.006 (.003)
Cohort		-.041*** (.006)	-.041*** (.006)	-.028** (.009)
CDU		-.003 (.028)	-.062 (.038)	-.064 ¹²⁵ (.038)
Other parties		-.031 (.029)	-.071 ¹²⁶ (.039)	-.068 ¹²⁷ (.039)
No party		-.098*** (.023)	-.122*** (.032)	-.119*** (.032)
Female*CDU			.116* (.052)	.123* (.052)
Female*other parties			.084 (.056)	.080 (.056)
Female*no party			.050 (.043)	.043 (.043)
Female*Cohort				-.025* (.012)
Constant	.095*** (.008)	.321*** (.053)	.348*** (.056)	.314*** (.058)
N (level 1)	6437	6158	6158	6158
N (level 2)	3339	3315	3315	3315
Log-likelihood	-6254.1901	-5918.8093	-5916.0854	-5913.791
Level-2 Variance	.0408292	.0501094	.0500683	.0502162
AIC	12514.38	11855.62	11856.17	11853.58
BIC	12534.69	11916.15	11936.88	11941.01
ICC	0.099252613	0.124043976	0.124051772	0.124502862

Standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Note: All models use Stata command *xtmixed*.

Model 2, which adds up the interactions between parties and gender, produces very interesting results for the purpose of this chapter. The coefficient for CDU now refers to respondents who are men and we can see that it is not significant. On the contrary, looking to the interaction between CDU and female (which has a positive and significant coefficient), we observe that feeling close to the CDU is associated to an increase in the level of interest in politics, when the respondent is a woman (if compared to the reference category SPD men). This confirms the results that we got before (table 7.3). The fact that the increase in interest in politics is significantly stronger among CDU female sympathisers than among CDU male sympathisers suggests that it is not the fact that their party won the elections that is playing a

¹²⁵ P-value = 0.096

¹²⁶ P-value = 0.069

¹²⁷ P-value = 0.085

role here (otherwise it would affect women and men equally) but the presence of a female leader. It could be the case that female CDU sympathisers are particularly touched by the occurrence of elections, but since no interaction term is significant in the model for 2002-2003 we have to reject that possibility.

Similarly, the interaction between cohort and gender included in model 3 also offers stimulating results. We observed in all previous models that young people increased their level of interest in politics between 2005 and 2006 significantly more than older cohorts. The fact that that coefficient remains significant in model 3 reveals that this is true for men. Yet, since the coefficient for the new interaction is also significant (and negative) adds the information that it is particularly true for women¹²⁸. Furthermore, the fact that no similar result is detected for the 2002-2003 model (where the coefficient for the same interaction is barely significant and is positive) hints that the result for the 2005-2006 elections is provoked by something related to those elections. The next step is to analyse the predicted values for the most worthy of note results.

Figure 7.3 consists of a graphical representation of the predicted values of *difference in interest in politics*¹²⁹ organized by party with which respondents identified most in 2006 and by gender. While the dots are predicted values, the crosses refer to the confidence intervals, so they reveal the uncertainty with which the predicted values were estimated. Holding all other variables constant at their mean¹³⁰, and in accordance with the significant interaction term for gender and feeling close to the CDU found before (table 7.5), we observe that CDU women are predicted to have increased their level of interest in politics between 2005 and 2006 significantly more than CDU men, while the same cannot be said for any of the other party groups analysed (see figure 7.3). It is important to notice that, although the confidence intervals for the predicted values of CDU women and men do not touch each other (even if the graph could leave doubts), the differences found between women and men are still small. Regarding this last point it is nevertheless crucial to mention that even if the scale of the dependent variable ‘difference in interest in politics 2005-2006’ goes from -3 to 3, in practical terms around 66% of the respondents have the value zero (i.e. did not change at all; see table 7.3) and roughly 98% of them are distributed between -1 and 1 (see table B.2 in the Annexes). In other words, even considering all respondents, the variation in their difference in

¹²⁸ I ran the same model without the interactions added up in model 2 and the results for cohort and gender remain basically the same.

¹²⁹ These predicted values were calculated using the STATA command ‘predictnl’. The results were anyway confirmed though *Clarify* (using the command *reg* instead of *xtmixed*) and they are very similar.

¹³⁰ Means were calculated within each gender.

interest in politics between 2005 and 2006 is very small. Compared with figure B.1 in the Annexes, it is clear that CDU sympathisers had a different pattern of change in their interest in politics in 2002-2003.

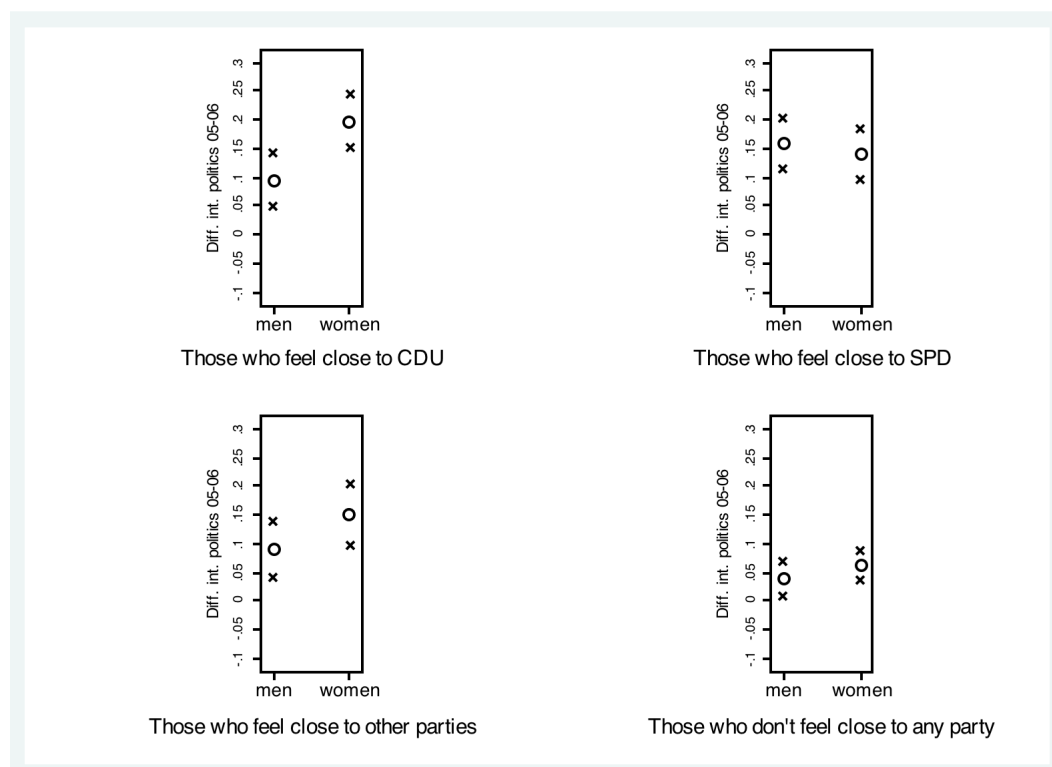


Figure 7.3: Expected values for the difference in the interest in politics in 2005 and 2006, in both genders and in different political groups

Note: Crosses are 90% confidence interval for the expected values. The original scale of the variable 'difference in interest in politics 2005-2006' goes from -3 to 3. While the dots are predicted values, the crosses refer to the confidence intervals.

Let us now turn our attention to the cohort analysis. Figure 7.4 presents predicted values for the difference in the interest in politics in 2005 and 2006, by cohort and by the political party respondents felt closest to in 2006, for women (red symbols) and men (black symbols). The results vary a lot according to partisan preference. Among SPD sympathisers, the difference between sexes, even considering cohorts, is negligible. Concerning those who do not feel close to any party or those who feel close to a party that is neither SPD nor CDU, the differences are also minor (mainly among the former) except for the two first cohorts of each graph (17 to 40 years old in 2005). Regarding those, there are clear differences between women and men, with younger women presenting a tendency to increasing their level of interest more than men. It is however important to note that the confidence intervals touch each other (much less than in any other cohorts of the same graphs but they still do), so in the limit we cannot exclude the possibility that the real values for women and men are equal. But

the most interesting results of figure 7.4 correspond to those who feel close to the CDU. Among them, there are clear statistical significant differences between women and men in the first two cohorts (17 to 40 years old), and a not so clear but also visible distinction in the third cohort (41 to 50 years old in 2005).

These results suggest that three individual characteristics were determinant for increasing the level of interest in politics between 2005 and 2006. The first and most important is being a woman. Gender is indispensable but by itself not enough (see figure 7.1). The second most important characteristic is party preference. CDU women increased their level of interest significantly more than their male peers (see figure 7.3). The third characteristic is age and, combined with the previous two, is extremely powerful (see figure 7.4). When not combined with party preference, the effect of age is still visible (case of those with no party or with other party in figure 7.4) but the differences between women and men are not significant (though almost).

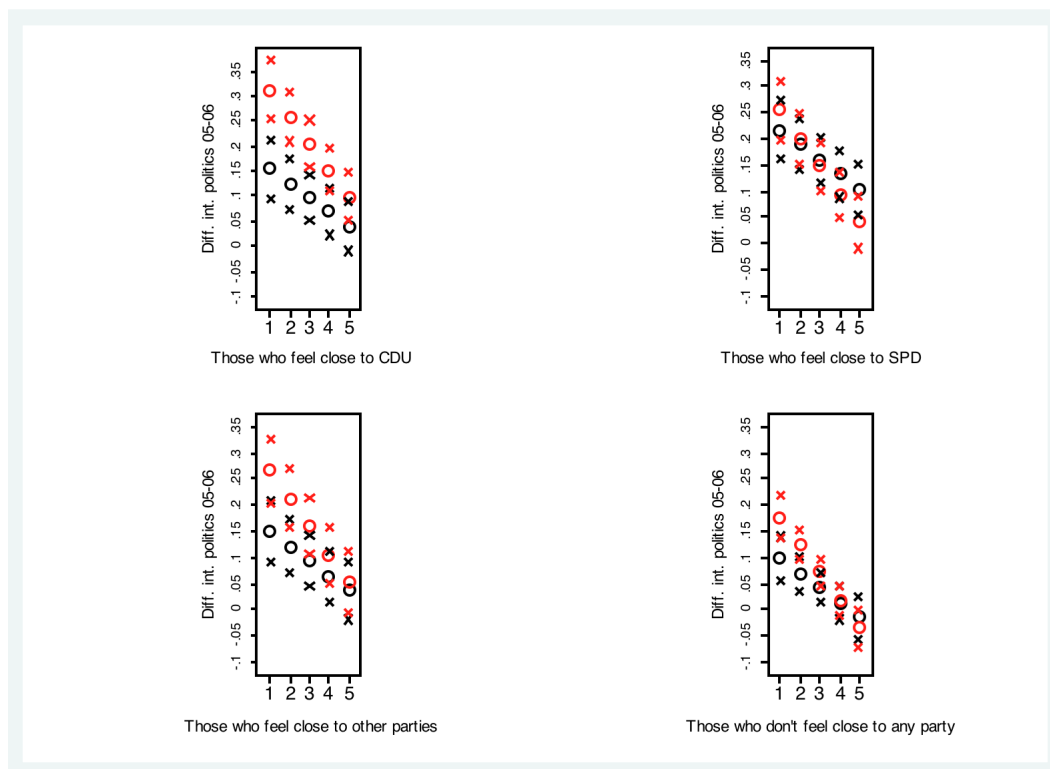


Figure 7.4: Expected values for the difference in the interest in politics in 2005 and 2006, by cohort (1 to 5) and by gender in different political groups

Note 1: Crosses are 90% confidence interval for the expected values. The original scale of the variable 'difference in interest in politics 2005-2006' goes from -3 to 3. While the dots are predicted values, the crosses refer to the confidence intervals.

Note 2: Red symbols represent women, while black men. In 2005, those who were included in the first cohort were between 17 and 30 years old; second: 31 and 40; third: 41 and 50; fourth: 51 and 65 and the fifth were 66 years olds or older.

The difference between the level of interest in politics of female and male CDU sympathisers (2005 – 2006) could be small but constant after 2006. That does not seem to be the case (see figure B.2 in the Annexes). So whatever affected CDU women was brief. Concerning female/male differences among CDU sympathisers, by cohort, the results are similar (see figure B.3 in the Annexes). First of all, it is very interesting to observe the distinct pattern of behaviour of the first two cohorts compared to the three older ones; while the first two are very unstable, the last three show only slight changes from survey to survey. The instability of the first two cohorts increased even more after Merkel's election. Mainly among the first cohort, the increase in their level of interest was very impressive (2005-2006), but it was followed by a decrease (in 2007), another increase (in 2008) and another decrease (in 2009). These changes might reflect the process of socialisation into politics, as mentioned before. The data does not give clear hints about the consequences that Merkel's election had in the long term, but it does show that not all female CDU cohorts reacted to Merkel's election the same way, and that the younger cohorts seem to have been more sensitive to it.

Conclusions

The goal of this chapter was to spell out the impact that the election of Angela Merkel might have had on women's (and men's) interest in politics and therefore contribute to the ongoing debate about the impact that the presence of female politicians is likely to produce on the persisting gender gap in political involvement. In particular, Merkel's analysis allows testing the relative importance of two factors which are considered relevant for the impact that the presence of female politicians might produce on citizens: appealing to women versus the importance and visibility of the political position.

The results clearly demonstrate that Merkel did not have an impact on all women, which attests that at least for a person with her characteristics, in a country like Germany, even if the political position is the highest possible, being a woman is not enough to increase women's level of political interest. However, the outcomes of this chapter also show that a combination of Merkel's gender and party was determinant (as previous research had suggested Reingold and Harrell, 2009). It is striking that even a self-declared non-feminist woman, who does not attempt to appeal particularly to female citizens, and does not use her gender as a political tool, has any sort of impact on women, even if only from her party. This result points out some evidence that when very visible politicians share some physical

characteristics with their constituents (namely party and gender), the latter are more likely to feel politically involved – even if the politician does not appeal directly to them.

Another main result of this analysis is that it is not simply the characteristics that female politicians share with the citizens that matter. Being a young citizen seems to also be an important criterion to see personal interest in politics being influenced by the presence of a female politician. A combination of being a woman, being a CDU sympathiser and being young show the strongest signs of impact. Men do not seem to have experienced any kind of change.

It is equally important to stress that none of the effects here observed is a long-lasting one. On the contrary, they seem to vanish (or become unclear) around one year after Merkel's election.

Altogether, these results follow the theoretical expectations of this project (chapter 3) and they do not exclude the possibility that if Merkel had directed her campaign and discourses more towards women, if this election had taken place in a country where leaders' personal characteristics are considered more important than in Germany, and if instead of being Christian Democrat Merkel belonged to a more left-wing party, the results would be different¹³¹. Therefore, this chapter increases the curiosity to analyse cases, such as Ireland or New Zealand, in which feminist women have served as national leaders. Unfortunately, there are no panel data available for these countries that would allow for this kind of analysis.

¹³¹ The latter could be the case because in the view of the citizens being a female politician fits better with belonging to a left-wing party than a more right-wing one (Dolan, 2004).

Part IV: Presence of female politicians: indifferent or crucial?

8 – Conclusions and discussion

Revisiting the project's goals and puzzle

This thesis focuses on two dimensions of the relationship between citizens and politics, namely the *level of political engagement* and the *evaluation of the political system*. The research question of this project is whether *having politicians who resemble their constituents in terms of their gender has an impact on the way citizens evaluate the political system and on their level of engagement in politics*. As well as answering to this research question, it also aims to contribute to the puzzle that explains the reason why the overrepresented group tends to react positively to the presence of the underrepresented group in the case of women vs. men, but negatively in the case of an ethnic minority vs. white. It is important to emphasise that the contribution that this thesis gives to this puzzle is limited, as its empirical focus is exclusively on women.

The first step in order to disentangle the puzzle and to answer to the research question was to develop a theoretical framework (chapter 3) aiming to understand the mechanisms that might explain the impact on citizens from the presence of female politicians. The second step was to further test empirically whether that is actually the case, i.e. that women and men react positively to the presence of women. The empirical analysis allowed testing different kinds of dependent variables within each dimension of the symbolic relationship between citizens and politics and it made the comparison of the potential impact of different layers of both the legislative and executive branches of political power possible.

The two dimensions of the relationship between citizens and politics that are likely to be influenced by the presence of female politicians, namely the level of political engagement and the evaluation of the political system, have very different characteristics. While there is a clear gender gap in political engagement, the same does not apply to the evaluation of the political system. The other difference between both dimensions is the potential mechanisms behind the impact. Concerning political engagement, the process is supposed to be unconscious, by imitation, or inspiration without an instrumental reason behind it; therefore without a clear mechanism. In contrast, the more positive evaluation of the political system due to the presence of female politicians is expected to be the result of *four* mechanisms and only one of them consists of an 'irrational' reason, and that is the linkage between descriptive

and symbolic representation, which was well described by Gay (2002: 731), quoting Abney and Hutcheson¹³²: politicians might lead to opinion change because of the image they project, regardless of the policies they defend. With the remaining three mechanisms that influence the evaluation of the political system, a belief that things are objectively better with the presence of the female politicians is implicit. Either because women will produce women-friendly public policies (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001: 352); or they will produce more caring or peaceful policies (due to the gender stereotypes) or simply because their presence gives a sign to citizens that the political system is more open and fair. A third difference between the dimensions is that while the evaluation of the system is an opinion, the level of engagement is a fact. Undoubtedly since both are measured through surveys, both are measured with error, but because the evaluation of the system is an opinion, explanations for it are amenable to testing. It is easier to understand the point I am trying to make here if we think that it makes more sense to ask someone why she/he evaluates the system more positively now than before, than why she/he is more interested in politics now than before. That is also the reason why a chapter like the one focusing on political system evaluation in Portugal (chapter 4) was possible but no similar chapter was feasible concerning the level of political engagement.

Disentangling the puzzle

The theoretical chapter (chapter 3) offers reasons why also men are expected to be influenced by the presence of female politicians. Two mechanisms are likely to influence the way women and men *evaluate the political system*, namely the stereotypes related to women and the fact that an increased female presence in politics might be seen as sign of a renewed political process (a novelty effect). All these reasons indicate that an influence in the way men evaluate the political system is very likely. Less probable, but possible, is a positive influence in men's political engagement, which could happen as a consequence of a more positive evaluation of the system – see figure 3.1. Concerning both dimensions of the symbolic relationship between citizens and politics, the influence on men may not be as strong as among women – to whom all mechanisms apply – including the intangible mechanisms that operate behind the increase in the level of political engagement (social meaning, politics of recognition and role model effect).

¹³² Abney, Glen and John D. Hutcheson (1981), 'Race, representation and trust'. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 45 (1): 91 – 100, p. 100.

Some studies that focus on minorities demonstrated negative outcomes for the overrepresented groups as a consequence of a higher presence in political power of the underrepresented group (Barreto, Segura et al., 2004; Gay, 2001). Let us now reflect on each one of the mechanisms (described in chapter 3) likely to apply to men (stereotypes, sign of renewal and novelty effect) and think whether or not they are likely to apply also to white citizens (when facing the presence of black politicians). The first mechanism of interest is *stereotypes*.

There is an old tradition of segregation of ethnic minorities across the world. In the beginning of the 1990's, 'advocates of symbolic racism theory contend that racism and prejudice have not abated in American society, [but instead have] only found new forms of expression' (Glaser, 1994: 23). As a consequence, 'blacks have faced and continue to face negative stereotypes regarding, for example, their intelligence, work ethic, and morality' (Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004: 259). Although whites attribute similar stereotypes to Hispanics, the latter have been more incorporated into white society and therefore their stereotypes tend to be less negative (Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004: 259). Also, it is important not to forget that ethnic minorities are often immigrants who tend to be seen as increasingly negative in many nations (Rustenbach, 2010).

A recent study suggested that overall black stereotypes are different from stereotypes of black politicians (Schneider and Bos, 2011). In fact, black politicians have more in common with white politicians than with the superordinate group 'Blacks' (Schneider and Bos, 2011: 222).¹³³ According to the same study, three main points distinguish black politicians from the other politicians: first, they are less likely to be seen as possessing the more prestigious attributes (such as being educated, rich, a strong leader, powerful, good speaker and accomplished); second, black politicians display more integrity and empathy; and third, they are seen as good at handling specific issues that disproportionately affect the Black community (Schneider and Bos, 2011: 224). Further, even more than black people in general, black politicians tend to be seen as Democrats (Schneider and Bos, 2011: 223).

Although comparison is difficult because the research methods used differ a lot, stereotypes of black politicians are reminiscent of stereotypes of female politicians. The latter are seen as more compassionate, better able to deal with women's issues and leaning more toward the Democrats. It is possible that a few more positive characteristics are attributed to

¹³³ An important fact is that this study was fielded in March 2008 (or so it seems, it is not totally clear from the paper) while the 2008 Democratic Party presidential primaries in the US were taking place and Baraka Obama was a potential future President of the US.

women than to black politicians, but the main difference between the way women and ethnic minorities are seen seems to be related to what I argued in the Introduction (chapter 1). Women and women's issues are more part of most men's life than ethnic minorities' issues are for the overrepresented group. So, for instance, the fact that women are perceived as better able to deal with women's issues might be more valued than facility at handling issues that particularly affect the ethnic minority. In fact, the latter might be seen as a threat: 'the implication for white voters is that Black politicians will focus more on their own group than the interests of white voters' (Schneider and Bos, 2011: 225). Following the same train of thought, Glaser also argues that 'resistance to racial change clearly is more than an expression of prejudice, overt or veiled in conservative logic. It is a response to the possibility that whites stand to lose something valued to blacks' (Glaser, 1994: 40).

Concerning the two mechanism (sign of renewal and novelty effect), it seems logical that the presence of some politicians from ethnic minorities in a majoritarian white environment have potential to be seen as a sign of an open and fair. It is even possible that for many white people that is actually the case and that it therefore contributes to improvement in the way they evaluate the political system. However, the old tradition of segregation of ethnic minorities makes it unlikely to be the rule.

Summary of the empirical results

Before drawing general conclusions, let us try to do a brief summary of the main results of each empirical chapter. The main results of the chapter on Portugal (chapter 4) are very important, as they help to understand some of the mechanisms that could operate behind the outcomes we see in the other chapter that focuses on the evaluation of the political system (chapter 5). The goal of the chapter on Portugal is to identify why some people might be willing to have many more female MPs in National Parliament. The category 'many more women' was chosen instead of the category 'a few more women' because the latter was the most consensual answer, aiming at keeping the status quo. On the contrary, the response 'many more MPs' was only chosen by those who also held other women-friendly attitudes. The two main reasons associated with the choice of this category are the idea that men cannot represent their interests well enough (category chosen by women) and the idea that the lack of women is bad for democracy (category chosen by men and women). The two other categories: women have some better qualities as politicians than men, and male MPs should represent male citizens while female MPs should represent female citizens do not seem to be at all related to the will to see more female MPs in office. In other words, of the four

mechanisms proposed in figure 3.1 that explain how the presence of female politicians could have an impact on citizens' evaluation of the political system, only two seem to apply, namely the self-interest (which, as expected, applies to women only) and the sign of renewal or novelty effect (or the idea of a fair and open system) – which, as anticipated, applies to both women and men.

The result of chapter 4 is overall confirmed in chapter 5 since doing a cross national analysis we observe that in countries where there are more female politicians at the national level, citizens (both women and men) tend to feel more satisfied with the way democracy works. However, because the cross sectional longitudinal analysis did not corroborate all the results of the first part of the chapter, some caution is necessary when interpreting the results. Let us concentrate on each level of political power at the time, starting from the feminisation of parliament and government. The analysis leaves no doubt that in countries where the percentage of female MPs and ministers is higher, both women and men tend to feel more satisfied with the way democracy works. Yet, the proposition that, in countries where the presence of women in those political branches increases, the probability that citizens are satisfied with democracy was only observed in some of those countries. It is likely that the results are not clearer due to the little variation in feminisation of parliament and government over the short time-span available in the CSES dataset. This analysis requires validation in the future using a dataset with more points in time.

Concerning presidency, as in the case of female MPs and ministers it was observed that in countries in which there is a female President both women and men tend to feel more satisfied with the way democracy works. However, due to lack of available data, it could not be ascertained whether moving from a situation in which the President is a man to another in which the President is a woman leads to an increase in citizens' level of satisfaction with democracy. Finally, the presence of a female Prime Minister produces the most robust results, since both analyses performed gave the same result: the existence of a female PM is associated with a higher – and with an increase – in women's (but not men's) level of satisfaction with democracy. The only weakness of this analysis is that only two countries have a female PM in the dataset, New Zealand and Germany (the latter of which has only just entered the longitudinal analysis).

The analysis done in this chapter leaves no doubt that men's evaluation of the political system is influenced by the presence of female politicians – almost as much as women's. What remains unclear is why a female President seems to have an impact on both sexes, while a female PM seems to have an impact only on women.

We observe signs of impact in both chapters that focus on the impact that the presence of female politicians might have on citizens' political involvement (chapters 6 and 7). In chapter 6, using the same cross national data it was observed that, from the five forms of political participation analysed, voting persuasion showed the least sign of relationship with the feminisation of any layer of political power. This result is consistent with previous findings (Hansen, 1997). The main conclusion of this chapter is that not all forms of political participation seem to be affected by the presence of female politicians in the same way, and not all layers of political power seem to have the same effect. In fact, while the presence of women in parliament and in ministerial positions is associated with participation in protests and with working together with others who share the same concern, the existence of a female national leader (either President or Prime Minister) is more related to showing support for a party or candidate and contacting a politician. This suggests that the feminisation of parliament and government is more connected with the most unconventional forms of participation, while female national leaders are more associated with conventional forms of politics. It is unclear why that might be the case. One possibility, as mentioned in chapter 8, is that the presence of one only female politician works better as a role model effect and therefore enhances women's wish to be active in conventional politics, while the feminisation of parliament and ministries creates a more diffused impact on women's political engagement, not necessarily oriented towards conventional politics.

Perhaps even more than what was to be expected from the theoretical framework, men are not indifferent to the presence of female politicians. In fact, female representation in political power is associated with men working together with others and with contacting a politician. Even if the signs of impact are clearly more evident in the case of female rather than male citizens, the signs of impact on both sexes are modest. The most robust result refers to the relationship between the feminisation of parliament and government and women's participation in protests. It is important to emphasise that compared to the analysis performed in the previous chapter (chapter 5), the analysis of this chapter is less demanding as it only aims to explore the situation in one point in time – instead of longitudinally.

Finally chapter 7, which focuses on the election of Angela Merkel, shows some clear signs of positive impact on women's level of political interest, but only among those who share the same partisan sympathy as Merkel and – though less strongly – among young people (who do not sympathise with the SPD). The impact of Merkel's presence is mainly visible among CDU's young, female sympathisers. This outcome calls attention to the importance of party congruence and confirms previous findings (Reingold and Harrell, 2009).

It also corroborates the idea that young people are particularly permeable to what happens around them, since they are still in the period of socialisation with the political world (Franklin, 2004).

However, the analysis performed in this chapter also demonstrates that Merkel's impact did not last long. Furthermore, it affected only particular groups of female citizens suggesting that being a woman and occupying the most prestigious political position in a country is not enough to influence most women's level of interest in politics. It is possible that if Merkel had appealed differently to female citizens, if she had used her gender more as political tool, this result would be different – since an advantageous environment has been proved to be important. All the studies that analysed similar questions, focusing on the 1992 American elections are a good example of that (Koch, 1997; Hansen, 1997; Sapiro and Conover, 1997; High-Pippert and Comer, 1998). All these authors report clear signs of impact of the presence of female politicians that are very likely to be connected to the fact that 1992 was proclaimed as the 'Year of the Woman'.

General conclusions

Table 8.1 presents a summary of the results of chapters 5, 6 and 7. Chapter 4 was not included because, being of a different nature, it does not fit in with the categories that compose table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Summary of the results of chapters 5, 6 and 7: stating whether or not there was a sign of impact

Dimensions of the relationship between citizens and politics	Dependent variables	Female MPs and ministers		Female President		Female PM (NZ and/or Germany)	
		women	men	women	men	women	men
Evaluation of the political system	Satisfaction with democracy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Satisfaction with democracy (longitudinally)	Yes (but only in some countries)	Yes (but only in some countries)	_____	_____	Yes	No
Political involvement	Persuade others to vote for a party/candidate	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Show support for a party/candidate	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
	Take part in a protest/demonstration	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
	Work together with others	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
	Contact a politician	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Interest in politics (panel analysis)	_____	_____	_____	_____	Yes (but only if from same party)*	No

* And even more among women who belong to a young cohort.

The presence of female politicians seems to be more connected with the way citizens' evaluate the political system than with their level of political involvement. While most scholars have examined the impact of the presence of female politicians on political engagement, the findings of this dissertation suggest that it is actually more probable to find an impact if we look at the evaluation of the political system. This fact is also borne out by the previous literature since the only four studies that I know of that focused on issues related to the evaluation of the system found some sign of impact (Atkeson and Carrillo, 2007; Lawless, 2004; Karp and Banducci, 2008; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005). This means that the 'mechanisms' at work here are not so much 'social meaning' (Mansbridge, 1999), 'politics of recognition' (Taylor, 1992; Phillips, 1995) or 'role model effect' (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001) (which are the mechanisms that supposedly act behind the impact on

level of political involvement), but one of the mechanisms associated with the de facto legitimacy argument (Mansbridge, 1999). This finding is particularly important since most of the studies that focus on the impact the presence of female politicians has on citizens' political attitudes talk about the 'role model effect'. In contrast, this study hints that the presence of female politicians tends mainly to bring out two other mechanisms among citizens. The first one is the self-interest (Burns, Schlozman et al., 2001) or substantive representation (Pitkin, 1967) according to which women believe that female politicians will represent their interests better. The second one is the ideal of a fair and open political system that the arrival of women as newcomers to the political world is likely to produce. Whether these two are really the most important mechanisms would have to be confirmed for other countries besides Portugal.

Furthermore, this research seems to corroborate my suspicion – formulated after having analysed the State of the Field (section 2.2) – that for an impact to be observed in *political involvement*, something else besides the presence of female politicians has to be ensured; while for the impact on *evaluation of political system* the simple presence of female politicians seems to be enough. The analyses performed in this thesis clearly confirm the former and give some hints that the latter may also be true. Concerning the former, Angela Merkel's election offered the perfect research design since, as stated before, she is the 'ideal type' of a politician who is a woman but does nothing to emphasise that (chapter 7). And in fact, the outcomes of that chapter reveal signs of impact that is conditional on party and age. The cross sectional chapter (chapter 6) does not aim to understand the specificities about each country's female politicians, but the relative fragility of the results suggests that, at least in some countries, nothing more than a conditional effect is observed. Concerning the *evaluation of political system*, at least according to the steady cross sectional analysis, the simple presence of female politicians seems to be enough. However, this proposition has to be double-checked with a dataset more suitable for doing a time-series cross sectional analysis.

All expectations (chapter 3) regarding which sex should be connected to the presence of female politicians are confirmed. Level of political engagement applies essentially to women and only in some particular situations also to men, while evaluation of the system applies almost equally to both sexes – although slightly more to women (in NZ and Germany). Without knowing the exact mechanism at work in each situation it is difficult to understand what explains why in some situations men are affected while in others not. However, these results do make clear that in any study around this topic, the overrepresented group should be included.

Concerning the different layers of political power, the results suggest that a female PM in a parliamentary regime is very likely to produce an impact in almost all the dependent variables analysed. This is probably connected to the visibility and the importance that the position has, associated with the admiration that its occupation by a woman might provoke. It is however necessary to confirm this result with more countries in this situation besides NZ and Germany. The presence of female MPs and ministers is also important for both dimensions of the relationship between citizens and politics. It would be very interesting to be able to confirm that the feminisation of parliament and government is mainly connected with unconventional forms of political participation.

All together, the signs of impact of the presence of female politicians are modest. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, it would be illogical to expect more than a modest impact considering the relatively little importance that the sex of politicians has compared to many other issues.

Implications and further issues

The main conclusion of this thesis is that women are not indifferent to the presence of female politicians but neither is it extremely important to them. Neither are men indifferent but it is less important to them than it is to women. Most importantly: the presence of female politicians does not have any negative effect on men; it has either a positive effect or no effect at all. In this sense, when thinking of arguments that justify the inclusion of more women in political power, the advantages that their presence bring to citizens' level of political involvement or to the way they evaluate the system should not be the main one, but it should not be completely disregarded either.

Furthermore, it is important to consider that in this dissertation only short-term effects (case of chapter 7) or short/medium-term effects were analysed. Certainly few people doubt that the increasing presence of women in politics has consequences for the variables explored in this thesis (among many others) simply because that is the common way in which things change in a society. Changes contribute to the transformation of mentalities that will then lead to other changes. What is in doubt is how long those changes take to occur and, as with everything that suffers a slow evolution throughout time, how to isolate the part of the effect that is provoked by female politicians from other causes. That is to say that the impact of interest here is very likely to be broader than what this analysis – or any analysis – is able to show.

Annexes

Annex A – Details on the CSES dataset

Table A.1: List of countries that are part of the main CSES analysis (module 2); basic macro-variables

Countries	Month and year of elections	Election type (to which the survey corresponds)	Democratic Regime Types	New democracy	Disproportionally of the electoral system (actual)	Disproportionally of the electoral system (previous year)
Albania	July 2005	Parliamentary/legislative	Parliamentarism	Yes	30.21	8.12
Australia	October 2004	Parliamentary/legislative	Parliamentarism	No	8.56	9.66
Belgium	May 2003	Parliamentary/legislative	Parliamentarism	No	5.06	2.93
Brazil	October 2002	Parliamentary/legislative and Presidential	Presidentialism	Yes	3.07	3.19
Bulgaria	June 2001	Parliamentary/legislative	Semi-presidentialism	Yes	4.9	5.7
Canada	June 2004	Parliamentary/legislative	Parliamentarism	No	9.78	13.51
Chile	December 2005 & January 2006	Parliamentary/legislative and Presidential	Presidentialism	Yes	6.82	5.08
Czech Republic	June 2002	Parliamentary/legislative	Parliamentarism	Yes	5.5	5.6
Denmark	November 2001	Parliamentary/legislative	Parliamentarism	No	.81	.37
Finland	March 2003	Parliamentary/legislative	Parliamentarism	No	3.04	3.02
France	April & May 2002	Presidential	Semi-presidentialism	No	22.9	17.65
Germany	September 2002	Parliamentary/legislative	Parliamentarism	No	3.83	2.71
Great Britain	May 2005	Parliamentary/legislative	Parliamentarism	No	16.81	17.69

Hungary	April 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Parliamentarism	Yes	7.5	4.2
Iceland	May 2003	Parliamentary/ legislative	Semi- presidentialism	No	1.68	.99
Ireland	May 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Parliamentarism	No	6.48	6.42
Israel	January 2003	Parliamentary/ legislative	Prime ministerial	No	2.53	2.22
Italy	April 2006	Parliamentary/ legislative	Parliamentarism	No	3.37	7.03
Japan	July 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative	Parliamentarism	No	7.83	7.83
Mexico	July 2003	Parliamentary/ legislative	Presidentialism	Yes	4.74	6.7
Netherlands	May 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Parliamentarism	No	.83	1.07
New Zealand	July 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Parliamentarism	No	1.89	2.77
Norway	September 2001	Parliamentary/ legislative	Parliamentarism	No	3.02	3.48
Philippines	May 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative and Presidential	Presidentialism	Yes	6.55	6.14
Peru	April & June 2006	Parliamentary/ legislative and Presidential	Presidentialism	Yes	13.95	8.95
Poland	September 2001	Parliamentary/ legislative	Semi- presidentialism	Yes	6.2	10.4
Portugal	March 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Semi- presidentialism	No	5.34	5.15
Romania	November & December 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative and Presidential	Semi- presidentialism	Yes	3.3	8.3
Slovenia	October 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative	Semi- presidentialism	Yes	4.6	2
Spain	March 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative	Parliamentarism	No	5.14	6.06
South Korea	April 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative	Presidentialism	Yes	12.11	8.91
Sweden	September 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Parliamentarism	No	1.12	.94
Switzerland	October 2003	Parliamentary/ legislative	Assembly- independent	No	4.3	4.3
Taiwan	December 2001	Parliamentary/ legislative	Semi- presidentialism	Yes	3.1	6.69
United States	November 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative and Presidential	Presidentialism	No	2.69	1.69

Table A.2: Countries and macro-variables specific to the analysis of the satisfaction with democracy

Countries	Month and year of elections	Election type (to which the survey corresponds)	Party that won election ¹³⁴	Free-dom house score	Real GDP per capita (PPP\$)
Albania	July 2005	Parliamentary/ legislative	PD Democratic Party	6	5.316
Australia	October 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative	Liberal Party of Australia	2	30.331
Belgium	May 2003	Parliamentary/ legislative	Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten (Flemish Liberals and Democrats)	2	28.335
Brazil	October 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative and Presidential	Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores), Lula da Silva	5	7.770
Bulgaria	June 2001	Parliamentary/ legislative	National Movement Simeon The Second (NMS II - NDST)	4	6.890
Canada	June 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative	Liberal Party of Canada	2	31.263
Czech Republic	June 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD)	3	15.780
Denmark	November 2001	Parliamentary/ legislative	Left, Liberal Party	2	29.000
Finland	March 2003	Parliamentary/ legislative	Center Party	2	27.619
France	April & May 2002	Presidential	Rally For The Republic (Rassemblement Pour La République), J. Chirac	2	26.920
Germany	September 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Social Democratic Party (SPD)	2	27.100
Great Britain	May 2005	Parliamentary/ legislative	Labour (Lab)	2	33.238
Iceland	May 2003	Parliamentary/ legislative	Independence Party (IP) (Sjálfstæðisflokkur)	2	31.243
Ireland	May 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Fianna Fail ('Soldiers Of Destiny')	2	36.360
Israel	January 2003	Parliamentary/ legislative	Likud	4	20.033
Italy	April 2006	Parliamentary/ legislative	The Union (Unione)	2	28.529
Japan	July 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative	Liberal Democratic Party	3	29.251

¹³⁴ When the election to which this column is not clear, please check the third column of the table. In those cases, the results refer to the election in bold.

Mexico	July 2003	Parliamentary/ legislative	‘Alliance for All’ (‘Alianza para todos’), Institutional Revolutionary Party & Mexican Green Ecological Party ¹³⁵	4	9.168
Netherlands	May 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Christian Democratic Appeal (Christen Democratisch Appèl)	2	29.100
New Zealand	July 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Labour	2	21.740
Norway	September 2001	Parliamentary/ legislative	Labour Party	2	29.620
Philippines	May 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative and Presidential	LAKAS-CMD, Lakas - Christian-Muslim Democrats, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	5	4.614
Poland	September 2001	Parliamentary/ legislative	Democratic Left Alliance	3	9.450
Portugal	March 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Social Democratic Party (PSD)	2	18.280
Romania	November & December 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative and Presidential	Justice and Truth Alliance (PNL-PD) ¹³⁶	4	8.480
Slovenia	October 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative	Slovenian Democratic Party (Slovenska demokratska stranka-SDS)	2	9.902
Spain	March 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative	Spanish Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE))	2	25.047
South Korea	April 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative	Uri Party	4	20.499
Sweden	September 2002	Parliamentary/ legislative	Social Democrats	2	26.050
Switzerland	October 2003	Parliamentary/ legislative	Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC)	2	30.552
United States	November 2004	Parliamentary/ legislative and Presidential	Republican Party, George W. Bush	2	39.676

¹³⁵ The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the Mexican Green Ecological Party (PVEM) formed a political coalition in 97 out of 300 federal districts (SMD). That coalition was named ‘Alliance for All’ (‘Alianza para todos’). Since we cannot separate votes by party within the coalition, I decided to consider the ‘winner’ as all those who voted either for the coalition, or for each of the parties (PRI and PVEM) separately. I am very thankful to CSES member Marissa Ariza for her clarifications on this issue.

¹³⁶ The winner of the 2004 Romanian parliamentary election was the National Alliance: PSD+PUR. However, two weeks later (early December), the presidential runoff was won by the PNL-PD candidate, Traian Basescu. As the Romanian Constitution states that the President is the one nominating the Prime Minister, Traian Basescu nominated somebody from his alliance, PNL-PD, in spite of someone from the PSD+PUR (party which had won the parliamentary elections). A coalition government was then formed around PNL-PD. Furthermore, in the CSES dataset, PNL-PD has many more votes than the PSD+PUR – which suggests that in the public’s mind, PNL-PD was perceived as the winner of the 2004 elections. For all these reasons I have considered PNL-PD as the winner for the purposes of this analysis. I am very thankful to CSES member Andrei Gheorghita for his clarifications on this issue.

Table A.3: List of countries used in the longitudinal analysis, by time points and years

Countries	Time points				
	1	2	3	4	5
Australia - yes	1996 (mod1)	2004 (mod2)	2007 (mod3)		
Belgium – yes	1999 (mod1)	2003 (mod2)			
Canada - yes	1997 (mod1)	2004 (mod2)			
Czech Republic - yes	1996 (mod1)	2002 (mod2)	2006 (mod3)		
Denmark – yes	1998 (mod1)	2001 (mod2)			
Finland – yes	2003 (mod2)	2007 (mod3)			
France – yes	2002 (mod2)	2007 (mod3)			
Germany – yes	1998 (mod1)	2002 (mod2)	2005 (mod3)	2009 (mod3)	
Great Britain - yes	1997 (mod1)	2005 (mod2)			
Iceland – yes	1999 (mod1)	2003 (mod2)	2007 (mod3)	2009 (mod3)	
Ireland – yes	2002 (mod2)	2007 (mod3)			
Israel - yes	1996 (mod1)	2003 (mod2)	2006 (mod3)		
Japan – yes	2004 (mod2)	2007 (mod3)			
Mexico – yes	1997 (mod1)	2000 (mod1)	2003 (mod2)	2006 (mod3)	2009 (mod3)
Netherlands - yes	1998 (mod1)	2002 (mod2)	2006 (mod3)		
N. Zealand - yes	1996 (mod1)	2002 (mod2)	2008 (mod3)		
Norway – yes	1997 (mod1)	2001 (mod2)	2005 (mod3)		
Poland - yes	1997 (mod1)	2001 (mod2)	2005 (mod3)	2007 (mod3)	
Portugal – yes	2002 (mod2)	2005 (mod2)	2009 (mod3)		
Romania – yes	1996 (mod1)	2004 (mod2)			
Russia - yes	1999 (mod1)	2000 (mod1)	2004 (mod2)		
Slovenia - yes	1996 (mod1)	2004 (mod2)			
Spain – yes	1996 (mod1)	2000 (mod1)	2004 (mod2)		
South Korea -yes	2004 (mod2)	2008 (mod3)			
Sweden – yes	1998 (mod1)	2002 (mod2)	2006 (mod3)		
Switzerland - yes	1999 (mod1)	2003 (mod2)	2007 (mod3)		
USA - yes	1996 (mod1)	2004 (mod2)			

Note: In brackets there is information about the CSES module.

Table A.4: Explaining satisfaction with democracy by country

Country	Coef. (stand. error) % female MPs & ministers	Exp(B)	Coef. (stand. error) % female MPs &ministers*female	Exp(B)	N
Canada	-0.049*** (0.017)	.952	0.024 (0.024)	1.024	2728
C. Republic	-0.036*** (0.013)	.964	-0.004 (0.017)	.996	2925
Finland	0.157** (0.079)	1.170	-0.136 (0.108)	.873	1832
France	-0.025* (0.014)	.976	-0.009 (0.019)	.991	2192
Ireland	0.005 (0.071)	1.005	-0.084 (0.097)	.919	2592
Japan	-0.149**** (0.027)	.861	-0.040 (0.038)	.961	2181
Korea	0.152**** (0.043)	1.164	0.041 (0.060)	1.041	1360
Netherlands	-0.064*** (0.020)	.938	-0.073*** (0.028)	.930	4748
Norway	-0.213**** (0.033)	.808	0.027 (0.047)	1.027	4984
Poland	-0.129**** (0.012)	.879	0.009 (0.017)	1.009	4096
Portugal	-0.048** (0.020)	.953	0.021 (0.026)	1.021	3280
Russia	-2.761**** (0.621)	.063	-1.307* (0.765)	.271	3529
Slovenia	0.101*** (0.036)	1.106	-0.008 (0.052)	.992	1560

Standard errors in parentheses; **** p<0.001, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Note 1: This tables includes only the countries that went through a considerable increase in their percentage of women in parliament and in ministerial positions. The remaining countries can be found in the table A.

Note 2: The other independent variables included in the analysis (but not shown) are: female, education, age, employed, married, and winner.

Table A.5: Countries and macro-variables specific to the analysis of political participation

Countries	Month and year of elections	Women's suffrage (year)	Rate of female economic activity	Dummy for Scandinavia
Albania	July 2005	1920	49	No
Australia	October 2004	1962	49.3	No
Belgium	May 2003	1948	40.3	No
Brazil	October 2002	1934	43.7	No
Bulgaria	June 2001	1944	56.4	No
Canada	June 2004	1960	60.2	No
Chile	December 2005 & January 2006	1949	36.6	No
Czech Republic	June 2002	1920	61.3	No
Denmark	November 2001	1915	61.7	Yes
Finland	March 2003	1906	56.8	Yes
France	April & May 2002	1944	49.1	No
Germany	September 2002	1918	47.9	No
Great Britain	May 2005	1928	55.2	No
Hungary	April 2002	1953	48.6	No
Iceland	May 2003	1915	66.7	No
Ireland	May 2002	1928	37.9	No
Israel	January 2003	1948	49.5	No
Italy	April 2006	1945	37.4	No
Japan	July 2004	1945	48.5	No
Mexico	2003	1947	40.6	No
Netherlands	May 2002	1919	45.8	No
New Zealand	July 2002	1893	58	No
Norway	2001	1913	59.5	Yes
Philippines	May 2004	1937	53.8	No
Peru	April & June 2006	1955	59.1	No
Poland	September 2001	1918	57.1	No
Portugal	March 2002	1976	51.6	No
Romania	November & December 2004	1946	50.7	No
Slovenia	October 2004	1945	53.4	No
Spain	March 2004	1931	44.2	No
South Korea	April 2004	1946	50.1	No
Sweden	September 2002	1919	62.7	Yes
Switzerland	October 2003	1971	51.1	No
United States	November 2004	1920	59.6	No

Annex B – Complement to chapter 7

Table B.1: Explaining the differences in level of interest in politics between 2002 and 2003

	Null-model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Female		.033* (.015)	.054 (.034)	-.022 (.054)
Years of education		-.001 (.003)	-.001 (.003)	.000 (.003)
Cohort		-.030*** (.006)	-.030*** (.006)	-.041*** (.009)
CDU		.036 (.026)	.047 (.035)	.046 (.035)
Other parties		-.001 (.029)	.001 (.039)	-.004 (.039)
No party		-.096*** (.022)	-.078** (.030)	-.084** (.030)
Female*CDU			-.022 (.048)	-.023 (.048)
Female*other parties			-.004 (.055)	.002 (.055)
Female*no party			-.034 (.040)	-.025 (.041)
Female*Cohort				.021 ¹³⁷ (.012)
Constant	.039*** (.008)	.168** (.053)	.157** (.055)	0.191** (0.058)
N (level 1)	7336	7034	7034	7034
N (level 2)	3977	3944	3944	3944
Log-likelihood	-7339.9692	-6964.5902	-6964.1429	-6962.4643
Level-2 Variance	.0595605	.0619491	.0618268	.0617188
AIC	14685.94	13947.18	13952.29	13950.93
BIC	14706.64	14008.91	14034.59	14040.09
ICC	0.136079157	0.144446561	0.144185399	0.144006108

Standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Note: All models use Stata command *xtmixed*.

¹³⁷ P-value = 0.067

Table B.2: Frequency and percentage of the dependent variable ‘difference in interest in politics between 2005 and 2006’

Categories of answer	Frequency	Percentage
-3	3	0.05
-2	51	0.79
-1	760	11.81
0	4,228	65.68
1	1,303	20.24
2	83	1.29
3	9	0.14
Total	6437	100

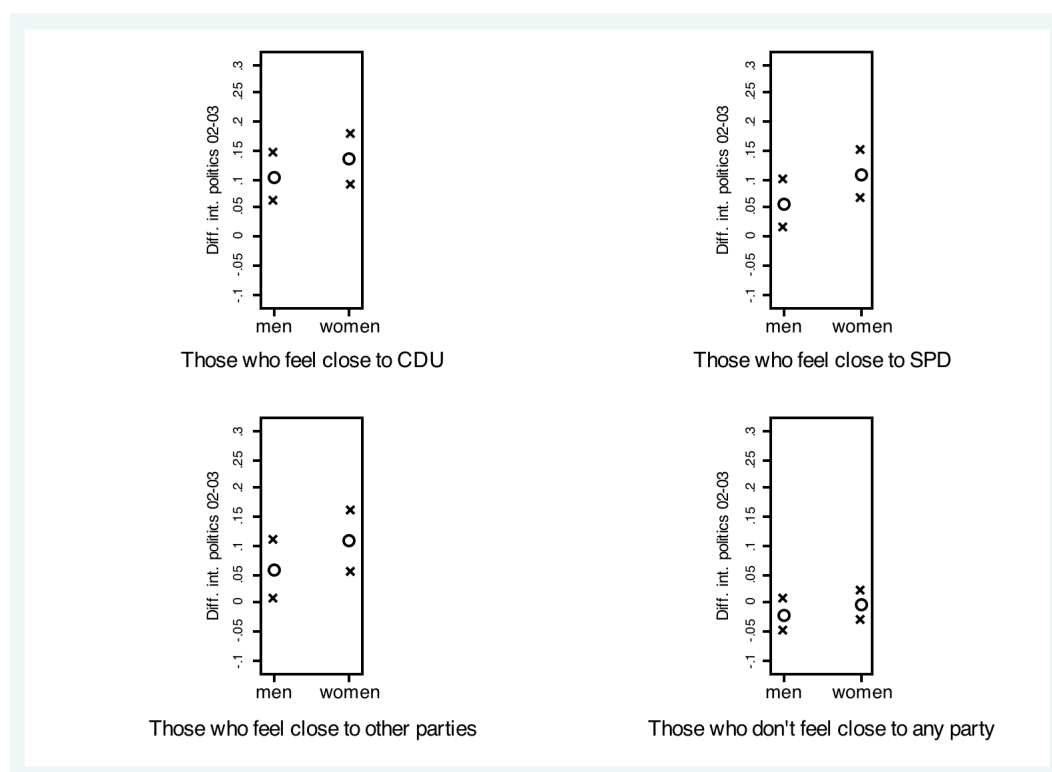


Figure B.1: Expected values for the difference in the interest in politics in 2002 and 2003, in both genders and in different political groups

Note: Crosses are 90% confidence interval for the expected values. The original scale of the variable ‘difference in interest in politics 2005-2006’ goes from -3 to 3. While the dots are predicted values, the crosses refer to the confidence intervals.

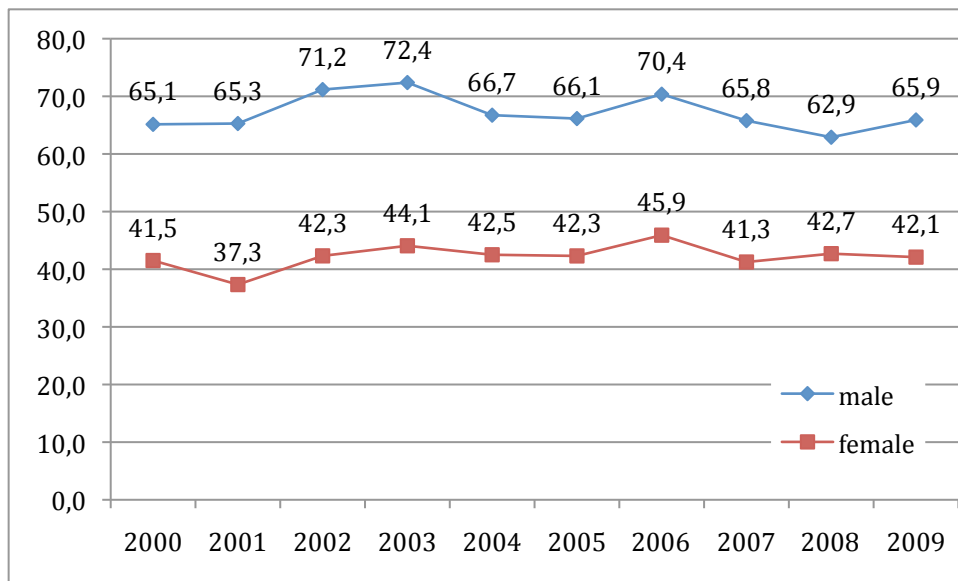


Figure B.2: Percentage of CDU sympathisers who feel interested and very interested in politics, by gender, throughout the years 2000-2009

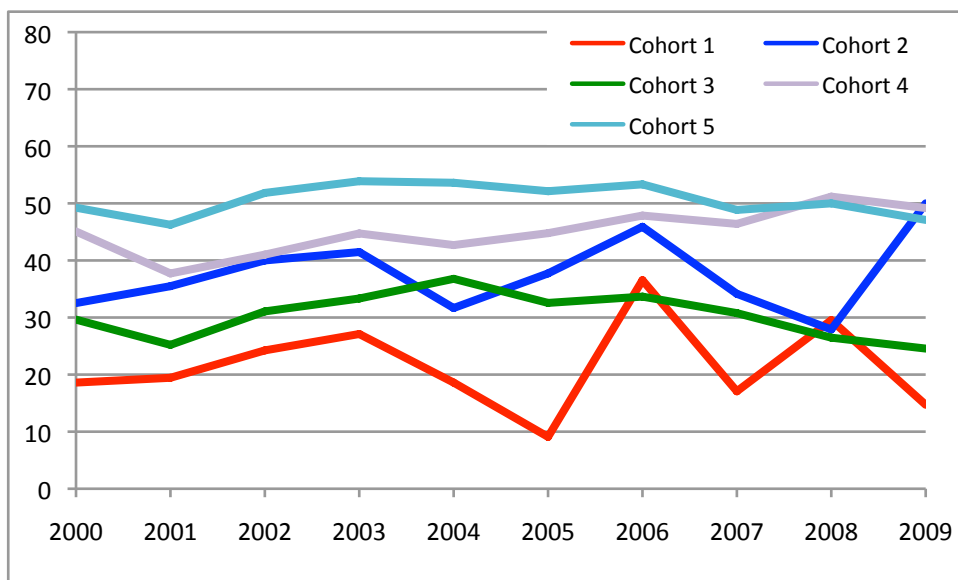


Figure B.3: Percentage of female CDU sympathisers who feel interested and very interested in politics, by cohort, throughout the years 2000-2009

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